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Hard Copy Books By Donna Cunningham:

How To Read Your Astrological Chart: Aspects Of The Cosmic Puzzle; Red Wheel/Samuel Weiser, Inc., 1999

The Moon in Your Life; Red Wheel/Samuel Weiser, Inc., 1996

Moon Signs: The Key to Your Inner Life; Ballantine Books, 1988

The Consulting Astrologer's Guidebook; Red Wheel/Samuel Weiser, Inc., 1994

Astrology and Vibrational Healing; Cassandra Press, 1988

Astrology and Spiritual Development; Cassandra Press, 1989

The Flower Remedies Handbook; Sterling Publishing, 1992

Spiritual Dimensions of Healing Addictions, With Andrew Ramer. Cassandra, 1988

Further Dimensions of Healing Addictions, With Andrew Ramer. Cassandra, 1988



This revised edition of ***An Astrological Guide to Self-Awareness*** is dedicated to Stephen Arroyo and to his staff at CRCS Publications. The book would not have existed had Stephen not approached me in the mid-1970s to ask if I would consider doing a book for them. Though I had been publishing articles for several years, the prospect of writing an entire book was overwhelming. Stephen persevered in encouraging me and coached me through an outline and the first several chapters. Throughout its history in print, the first edition was championed by CRCS, and I owe much of my success to the boost given by this book. I also want to thank them for returning the rights to the book to me once it was out of print, so that this new edition in ebook format was possible.

Without the help of my friend, Tom Savarese, this edition could not have happened, for out of the kindness of his heart, he scanned each page of the original hard copy book so that I did not need to type it all into the computer. For the past twenty years, Tom has been the most unselfish of friends, and I am glad for his presence in my life. Besides all that, his wicked humor makes me laugh.

Thanks also to Charity Heller-Hogge, of Mighty Pen Editing Services (<http://www.mightypenediting.com>) who worked hard to see the book through a newcomer's perspective and to make it beginner-friendly. And to Karen McCauley for editing the more technical chapters.

My love and thanks, finally, to my astrological mentors and teachers in the early years, especially Richard Idemon and Rod Chase. You will see their influence and insights reflected often in this book.

Acknowledgements: Many segments of the first edition of this book originally appeared as articles in *Dell Horoscope Magazine*, *Astrology Guide*, *Your Personal Astrology*, and other astrology magazines, though each has now been expanded and updated. Sources for individual articles will be given in the appropriate chapters. Here I wish to acknowledge not only the generosity of the publishers of those magazines in allowing me to reprint the articles but also the invaluable skills of their editorial staff in polishing the original articles into publishable form. Any mistakes in the final, expanded versions, however, are my own.



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However, I hope you will use this book in virtual form rather than printing it out entirely. We all love having books in our hands, and yet change is inevitable—even necessary. At the rate trees are being harvested, in five to ten years, there will be no paper for our children's textbooks or wood for homes. An e-book is one way you and I can contribute to saving the forests that are a vital part of our environment. They are crucial to our air quality, endangered animal and plant species, and rainfall levels. The *before and after* photos of an old-growth forest below may illuminate what my words cannot¹.

Donna Cunningham



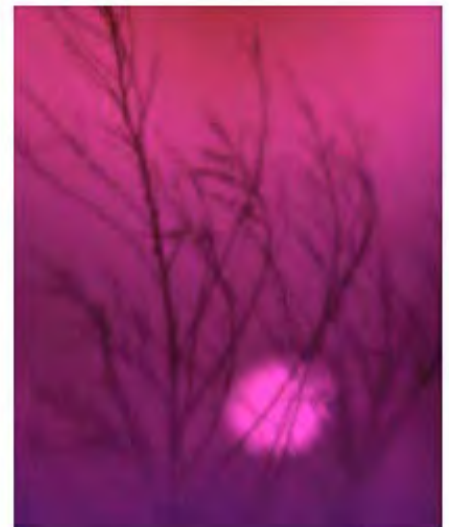
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* AN * ASTROLOGICAL * GUIDE * TO * SELF * AWARENESS

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INTRODUCTION: AGSA

THE STARS ARE NOT TO BLAME

I began writing the first edition of this book nearly thirty years ago, and now, working on a revised edition, I find myself alternately amused and embarrassed by the younger version of myself who once pontificated on nearly every page. She clearly had a lot of growing up to do; yet she seemed to know all the answers. You would have thought that she single-handedly invented metaphysics, depth psychology, and feminism.

Entering a new millenium, and having passed 60, I don't have nearly as many answers for myself, and surely not for you—and yet my clients and readers seem to find me more useful, not to mention less arrogant. Perhaps I have simply encountered many more of life's irresolvable dilemmas, or perhaps life itself is a great deal more complicated for all of us now than in the 1970s. All the same, astrology has an infinite amount to teach us, and so this revised edition is intended as a beginner-friendly guide for those who wish to go beyond Sun signs into the complexities of the birth chart.

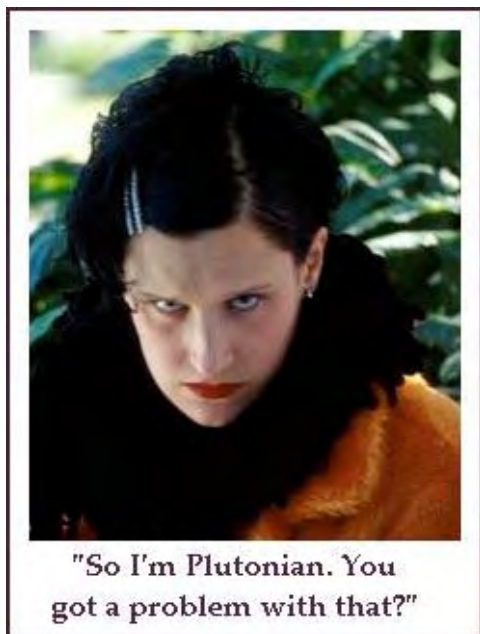


One new factor that has become fully integrated into the field of astrology since the early version of this book is asteroids. I asked my respected colleague, Joyce Mason, to contribute a new chapter on Chiron, the most commonly used asteroid. Another change is the technology, since astrological software was hardly dreamed of in three decades ago. Today's student will delight in AstroDataBank's CD-ROM of birth data covering over 26,000 notables and other interesting folks—a software treasure that incorporates the lifetime work of Lois Rodden, long the standard-setter in data collection¹. In this edition, I have drawn extensively on ADB's collection for celebrity examples of various features of the astrological chart.

One of my roles in our field over the years has been that of a trailblazer/troublemaker, and in that, at least, I have remained steadfast. Having lived for the past twelve years in the Pacific Northwest and viewing the consequences of slowly losing our forests, I can no longer countenance publishing my books on paper. In addition to being a friend to the environment we live in, you who read this in ebook format will find that there are many wonderful features that make ebooks an excellent learning tool—like searchability and hotlinks that take you directly to internet sites.

Another of the advantages of ebooks is that I was able to illustrate this new edition lavishly with photographs and other images that show the concepts I am trying to portray in graphic form. (The cost of the same images in a hard copy version would be prohibitive!) While this visual abundance began as a way to relieve the monotony of reading screenful after screenful of words on the computer monitor, it quickly evolved into a new teaching tool.

¹ For more information about AstroDataBank and to get on their mailing list for birth data of newsmakers, visit <http://www.astrodatabank.com>.



An aptly chosen image can capture my 35 years of experience in observing people and cycles through the lens of astrology far more vividly than words alone can do². Showing you what a person looks like who is acting out the qualities of the planet Pluto or the planet Uranus is much more direct and vivid than trying to convey these qualities in words. Know, then, that every image, every typeface color, and every symbol in this book has a meaning. Even if you don't consciously understand the images for Pluto or the Moon or Saturn, the next time you see that planet in action through the people around you, the photo will have more meaning for you.

What has NOT changed in all these years is the belief system underlying the writing. Let me explain my approach to astrology so you can take that framework into account when deciding whether or

not you agree with my conclusions³. I seek a psychological understanding of the behavior and traits described by the chart. In short, I do not believe in using the birth chart as the best of all possible excuses. ("I can't help drinking, Judge, I'm a Pisces.") It is a great tool for understanding people and finding their strengths as well as their weaknesses. For instance, astrologically sophisticated therapists find that they get much faster results using their patients' astrological charts as an adjunct to their work. I also believe that we **can** improve, that through insight and conscious effort, we can stop behaving in neurotic and self-destructive ways. The chart can help by pointing out more constructive uses of our basic traits.

My second bias, implicit in the one above, is that the stars are not to blame. I believe that our lives are not controlled by forces out there, but are shaped by our own thought patterns. The planets only reflect what is going on. Just as the mirror does not cause us to go gray, the planets do not cause bad things to happen to us. *We* make bad things happen through our self-defeating, neurotic, rebellious, or neglectful behavior. If you get fired, it's easy to blame that darned Uranus for crossing your Midheaven. But why not blame yourself for all those times you came in late? Likewise, the planets do not cause *good* things to happen either. *We* bring them about by our attitudes of openness, determination, and faith in life's possibilities.

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³ This section is reprinted from my editorial in the September, 1977 issue of *Astrology Today*, ©1977 by CBS Publications, the Consumer Publishing Division of CBS.

You may be asking, "If that's true, then what is the point of astrology?" That's like



asking a surgeon the point of a diagnostic x-ray, an architect what all those blueprints are for, or a tourist why a road map is needed. The chart *is* a sort of map to show you the way...it's not the chart's fault if you make a wrong turn or elect not to take the best route.

In other types of divination, we recognize more readily that the tool doesn't create the problem but only maps the terrain and points the way. In palmistry, for instance, we realize that a line on the palm does not *cause* you to live your life in a certain way; it only shows that you *do* live that way. Nor do we feel that the act of dealing a Tarot spread *causes* a situation to come out the way the cards say. We recognize that the cards only reflect and describe what the situation may be if you follow a certain course of action. If you choose to alter your behavior, the situation can change. To go to an even greater extreme, let's consider tea leaves. Predictions can be made from them, but surely the tea leaves are not to blame if you don't heed their warnings. People don't go around saying things like, "My life was just wonderful until I drank that cup of tea"—unless, of course, there was arsenic in it!

So why do we accept it when people say things like, "Neptune has totally ruined my life," or, "Saturn has destroyed my marriage?" It's better to say that all charts are *descriptive*. The chart does describe you, but it doesn't *cause* you to be that way, nor does it limit you to a negative expression of your potential, if that is where you are now.

At the time I wrote the first edition of this book, I would have been classified as a militant metaphysician, steeped in the absolute certainty typical of the 1970s that if you changed your thoughts you could change your reality. In this system of belief, it is not external conditions that determine your experiences; instead, your inner attitudes, beliefs, emotions, and needs act as magnets to attract the outer, tangible circumstances of your life to you. Like too many metaphysical sophomores, I would probably have concluded that if you faithfully did your affirmations and visualizations and then your reality didn't change, you were doing something wrong—that you were among the metaphysically challenged! Now I am more moderate in my position and not such a pie-in-the-sky optimist—to a limited extent, I have come to believe, quite reluctantly, in fate. No doubt the truth lies somewhere between these two extremes.

I believe, as many astrologers do, that before we are born we participate in creating a plan for this lifetime so that our life experiences can provide the greatest possible growth. Our birth charts carry the code for this plan, and so astrology is a useful study for understanding and working with the challenges we have set for ourselves. We must also consider the extent our options are influenced and at times even limited by the current track that humanity as a collective is pursuing. The unfolding of that collective destiny, many of us in this field believe, is revealed by the natal sign placements and transiting signs of the outer planets—Uranus, Neptune, and Pluto⁴.

Another preference I have is not relying on karma to explain away the things that happen to us. While I certainly believe in reincarnation, in practice it is an iffy concept to speculate about. We don't generally have the wisdom to know why certain experiences or specific

⁴ Detailed exploration of these ideas is beyond the scope of this volume, but you may wish to read my ebook series about the outer planets, *The Outer Planets and Inner life*. Visit my publications website, <http://www.moonmavenpublications.com> for more information.

people are sent into our lives. If we dimly discern the reason, it is often only in retrospect.

Many times "punishment" isn't the point at all—certain painful experiences are sent to help us become stronger and to push us out of the ruts we've gotten into. Much of the pain is of our own doing in *this* life—nobody told us to keep beating our heads against the wall. Such experiences are not karma but neurosis—self-defeating patterns that we keep on repeating long after we could have moved on elsewhere. "Karma" is often just a label we use to avoid examining our own part in creating a painful experience...another wonderful excuse.

Unfortunately, many people do use astrology as an excuse, just like those who study a little psychology—or listen to too much Oprah—then spend the rest of their lives blaming their parents for what's wrong with them. Astrological cop-outs shift the blame on a grander level—"the stars." And what a superlative excuse — who'd expect you to straighten out your life when the mess is due to something as distant, vast and out of your control as Neptune or Uranus?

Individuals who are in the process of evolving will learn the same thing from both astrology and psychology—that as adults, we bear the ultimate responsibility for our behavior and ourselves. We attract external events and conditions through our inner conflicts, needs, and attitudes, be they conscious or unconscious. Wrong thinking and wrong actions are the roots of the greater part of our troubles. Examine your thoughts, actions, and emotions in a problem situation to see how you may be contributing to or provoking the mistreatment you get.

What you will discover is that every difficult feature of the natal chart and every transit or progression can lead us to positive, constructive insight and action that will help us move along the spiritual path. We have the opportunity to grow by mastering adverse circumstances, inner conflicts and difficult times that we go through. With that in mind, we can regard difficult aspects, transits, and sign placements as opportunities to grow.



Astrology, in its higher uses, is a map for living our lives. The true usefulness of the astrological chart is that it gives us a better perspective on ourselves, so that we can appreciate our own individuality and potential, and then work toward their most positive expressions. Put another way, your chart is only an instrument panel where you take readings on the course of your life. **YOU ARE STILL THE PILOT!**

CHAPTER 1-AGSA

ASTROLOGY AS A TOOL FOR SELF-AWARENESS¹

A NOTE TO THE NEWCOMER: Welcome to the world of astrology. You will be meeting many new terms and ideas in rather intense form, and you may at times feel that your brain is being stretched. It is! My editor, Charity Heller-Hogge, herself a newcomer to astrology, has tried to alert me to places in the text that might be confusing, and so hopefully the text will be as clear and simple as this incredibly complex subject can be. Though terms will be defined as we go along, you may at times forget what they mean. In the bookmark section at the side of this page, you will find a glossary of astrological terms that you can quickly refer to at any time.

Astrology has two helpful functions. One function is to identify the strengths and abilities we possess so that we can capitalize on them. For instance, it was only because numerous astrologers encouraged me to write that I came to have faith in myself as a writer. Before that, I considered myself a lousy poet and left it at that. I'm still a lousy poet, but astrology gave me the courage to try other kinds of writing that have been more successful and fulfilling. My knowledge of my birth chart resulted in a change in the direction of my career and life—I became an author.

The second function, and the focus of this chapter, is to help us identify ways that we create our own problems and cause unhappiness for ourselves and those around us. As we learned in the introduction, the planets are not responsible for our happiness or unhappiness, but only point out the ways we create self-fulfillment or self-defeat. The chart is a guide to facing the resulting problems honestly and directly.

Self-defeat is more of a problem for most of us than any criticism an outsider can inflict on us. Do you know the ways that you are your own worst enemy? Traditionally, astrologers have looked at the twelfth house for the answer to this question, but the whole chart should be surveyed. Studying the charts for planets that are in difficult signs, houses and aspects² will reveal how you're contributing to your own barriers.





Self-defeating patterns in our lives are like patterns used in making clothes. The same one can be used over and over again. The clothes may look a little different because of variations in material, color, or size, but it's basically the same pattern. Likewise, the people you get involved with romantically, as friends, or in work situations might look a bit different in the beginning but wind up being surprisingly alike. For instance, a woman

¹ This section reprinted by permission of Sterling Publications. It appeared in the 1/78 issue of *Astrology Guide* under my pen name, Marisol Malone, as "Your Way to a Happier Personality—Self Acceptance & Astrology."

² An *aspect* is created when two planets form an angle like 60°, 90°, or 180° apart that indicates a particular type of interaction between the two planets—their energies are blended. Some common aspects include the *square* (90°), and *opposition* (180°), which are difficult blends, while the *trine* (120°) and *sextile* (60°) are harmonious.

Table 1: Signs, Houses, and Planets that are Naturally Connected

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Zodiac Sign:	Glyph	Ruler	Glyph	Matters of the Related House:
Aries: Fire Sign Cardinal		Mars		First House: First impressions and first approach to situations; image; appearance; self-presentation.
Taurus: Earth sign Fixed		Venus		Second House: Money and ways of earning and managing it; attitudes toward finance; things valued more than money.
Gemini: Air sign Mutable		Mercury		Third House: Communication; style of thinking and learning; siblings and near relatives; neighbors; basic education.
Cancer: Water sign Cardinal		Moon		Fourth House: Home and home life; roots; family ties; heredity; family influence; the nurturing parent; old age.
Leo: Fire Fixed		Sun		Fifth House: Children; romance; creativity; self-expression; performing; leisure activities; risk-taking.
Virgo: Earth Mutable		Mercury		Sixth House: Work and its meaning; work habits; types of jobs; coworkers and employees; health and health habits.
Libra: Air Cardinal		Venus		Seventh House: Partnerships—personal and business; close, committed relationships; types of people we attract.
Scorpio: Water Fixed		Pluto		Eighth House: Sexuality; partner's resources; inheritances, grants, etc; taxes; birth, death; transformation; healing.
Sagittarius: Fire Mutable		Jupiter		Ninth House: Religion, philosophy of life; higher education, advanced studies; teaching or preaching; law; foreign lands.
Capricorn: Earth Cardinal		Saturn		Tenth House: Career, long-term goals; how you are remembered; parental authority; bosses, type of boss you are.
Aquarius: Air Fixed		Uranus		Eleventh House: Friendship; peer relationships; group membership; social activism; aspirations.
Pisces: Water Mutable		Neptune		Twelfth House: Things that are repressed or hidden; self-defeating behavior; chronic illness; service; retreats; spiritual quest.

This table is loosely based on the system of equating signs, houses, and planets that was popularized by Dr. Zipporah Dobyns and taught to several generations of her students. Tiles with the sign glyphs are from Micrographx. Clip Art and glyphs for the planets are from Ancitita.

who wrote to my advice column had been married three times, and all three of her husbands beat her. As tactfully as possible, I replied that three abusive husbands were two too many, that—however unconsciously—she was choosing these men, and that unless she sought help, it was almost a given that the next man she hooked up with would beat her too. My prediction wasn't based on astrology; it just stood to reason.

Once you identify a self-defeating behavior pattern, however, the chart can lead you to an understanding of its root and how to begin correcting it. Each planet, sign, and house describes how you how operate in a particular area of life, as you will learn in the course of this book. Drawing on a system popularized by the late Dr. Zipporah Dobyns, the table on the previous page shows the signs, planets, and houses that are naturally connected with one another. Aries is connected with Mars and the first house, meaning that they have certain qualities and interests in common; Gemini is connected with Mercury and the third house, and so on.

We'll learn about the individual planets and the twelve houses of the horoscope in various chapters. A good starting place is a natal chart reading by a professional astrologer. For reference as we go along, however, you will want a computer printout of your birth chart, if you don't have one already—ask for one that lists the aspects between the planets. You can also specify, if you're not comfortable with the glyphs yet, that the printed version use abbreviations like NE for Neptune and SA for Saturn. For around \$30, you can also get a written chart interpretation about 30 pages long. Astronumeric Service is a chart service that's user-friendly for novices to astrology, including a toll-free order number and helpful phone staff: <http://www.astronumerics.com/>. Two other reliable services are Astrolabe, <http://www.alabe.com>, and Astro Communications, <http://www.astrocom.com>.

If you're a beginning student of astrology, you won't be able to draw the connections between planet, sign, and house as yet, but you should be able to when you've finished this book. You will learn that if communication blocks keep you from being understood, you'd analyze Mercury, the third house, and its ruler³. If you had a problem in love, you'd look at Venus, the seventh house, and its ruler. Over time, you will learn to trace the difficulty all the way back to its origins—it's not enough to say that Mercury in Scorpio illustrates hesitancy about expressing emotions outwardly. How did you get that way? The chart can tell you that, too, if you look at the question psychologically, as we will do in this book.



A common root of self-defeat is self-hatred, one of the most painful emotions you can feel. It is also one of the most crippling, because when you hate yourself, you act in ways that lead others to reject you, or in self-defeating ways that cause you to fail. Rejections and failures then make you hate yourself even more. How can you break out of this cycle? Search for the causes of your self-hatred and then get past them to accept and finally to love yourself.

I doubt if any psychotherapist would quarrel with that, and therapy *may* be needed to accomplish this deceptively simple-sounding task. However, a thorough understanding of your astrology chart can help greatly in this process. The natal horoscope can create a short cut by identifying the nebulous, generally unconscious, and seemingly irrational-seeming conflicts that lead to self-hatred.

³ The ruler of a house is the planet that rules the sign on the cusp (beginning edge) of that house. If Neptune ruled the tenth house, this would mean that the sign Pisces, which Neptune rules, would be on the tenth house cusp, also known as the Midheaven.

The Signs We Love to Hate—And What They Tell Us About Ourselves

Sometimes we only get at our self-hatred by indirect means—by examining what we hate in others. We have probably all had the experience of taking an immediate dislike to someone we've just met...and maybe had it pointed out to us none too kindly that we disliked that person precisely because they were too much like us in some unpleasant way. What we reacted to so strongly in them was actually something in ourselves that we don't like to face up to.

This goes for Sun signs as well. My teacher, Richard Idemon pointed out that the signs you hate tell a great deal—not necessarily about the sign *per se*—but *about yourself*. By the psychological mechanism of *projection*, we "disown" parts of ourselves that we don't approve of and assign them to someone or some group outside ourselves. "Me? Yearning to be passive and helpless instead of self-sufficient? No, it's *those Pisces!*"

If you've gone no further than Sun signs so far, you may be surprised to find out that you are carrying around in your birth chart the signs you love to hate. Following the connections between signs, planets, and houses in Table One, you may find them in unsuspected places. If you have your Sun conjunct Jupiter but can't bear Sagittarians, you are practically a Sag yourself! If you hate Aries with a passion but have Mars on the Ascendant, perhaps you hate an aggressive, competitive facet of yourself. Can't stand Gemini? Could that be where you have your South Node? Do Virgos set your teeth on edge? Strange...if you have several planets in the sixth house, you have such a lot in common! Look for the signs you hate in your own chart—you may find out you are projecting an important, disowned piece of yourself onto other people

Then there is the confessional brand of self-hatred...so named because it happens when we feel called upon to examine our faults, and it generally has a moralistic cast. "Why am I so *BAD*? What makes me do these terrible things? It is *BAD* to be so competitive!" Often in these cases what we are doing is identifying with one facet of our chart at the expense of another, often major facet. The part we identify with and want to be like is often one our parents approved of as "good," while the part of ourselves we disown is what our parents told us was "bad." Cultural conditioning plays its part too...in our culture, it is often considered "bad" or "unnatural" if a man shows strongly Venusian characteristics. Actually a strong Venus in a man's chart is neither good nor bad, but only an intrinsic piece of his nature.

The qualities our parents fostered and approved of are often reflected in our Rising Sign (also known as the *Ascendant*⁴.) The sign on the Ascendant reveals our *mask* or tools for trying to get along with others. The Ascendant is *not* our essential self... the Sun and Moon are far more basic to our character.

Many people are totally identified with their Ascendant. One friend was much more



⁴ The zodiac sign on the cusp of the first house is called the *Ascendant* or Rising sign. This sign, determined by the precise time of birth, is one of the three most important factors in the chart, along with the Sun and Moon. It represents our outer personality, the characteristics people first remark on when meeting us. It also shows the mask we wear in social situations, which may or may not show our true nature.

open to astrology once she found out she had Pisces rising. "I always thought I was more like a Pisces. Why, Leos aren't *nice* people!" She was meek and not at all dramatic in appearance despite being a **double Leo**⁵—that is, with both Sun *and* Moon in Leo. A double Leo who shows no Leo at all is a Leo in a heck of a lot of trouble. I call that kind of trouble "getting trapped in your Ascendant."

One client who was trapped in her Ascendant was a Gemini with Sun conjunct both Uranus and Saturn. She had Cancer rising, and this was what most people saw of her—mother to the world. When I pointed out to her that she really didn't have a motherly bone in her body, she admitted that she really resents having to take care of all those people. "But it's *BAD* to be the way you described my Sun!" It took her a long time to accept that not only was it not *bad* for her to be her Sun, it was more real and more truly herself. I told her I felt she was brilliant and that she was wasting a lot of time mothering people who did not appreciate being mothered. She might do more for humanity in the end if she concentrated on developing the tremendous potential of her Sun. **As in this case, considerable self-hatred can occur when the basic natures of your Sun and Moon or Ascendant are in disagreement because their signs are incompatible.**

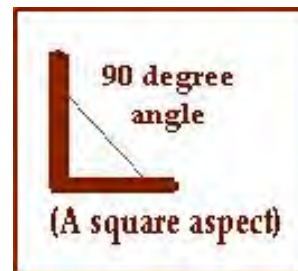
Understanding Conflicting Parts of Ourselves through the Birth Chart

If you will recall, an aspect is an angle between two planets, and you can ask for a list of aspects with your computer printout. A major source of self-hate can be hard aspects like squares, the right angle or 90 degree aspect. **We'll be discussing aspects in detail in Chapter 14, but the square,⁶ in particular, demands a resolution of the conflict within. All too often a bogus resolution comes about when you identify with one of the planets in the square at the expense of the other.**

Which side of the square you espouse is unpredictable, but the suppressed side will also come out, however, perhaps in a disguised and less-than-healthy manner that sabotages more conscious goals.

Let's consider two people who have Mars square Neptune. The conflict may be "resolved" in two different ways, depending on their upbringing. Suppose one person was brought up in a deeply religious home (one effect of Neptune) where Mars' natural competitiveness and aggression are regarded as "bad." Such an individual may suppress open competition and instead compete by becoming a "holier than thou" type or an evangelist. (What is evangelism but a disguised lust for conquest?)

The other person with Mars square Neptune may have been brought up in a terribly competitive and even combative home (an effect of Mars) where family members ridiculed compassion and spirituality (traits related to Neptune). Such an individual may resolve the conflict by making a religion of patriotism, racism, or some other militant **Is**m. (*Isms* of various ilks can be laid at the doorstep of Neptune or Uranus.)



⁵ The three most important factors of the chart are the Sun, Moon, and Ascendant. When more of one of them is in the same sign, that sign becomes a strong part of a person's nature. When two of them are in the same sign, let's say Leo, the person is a **double** Leo (or whatever the sign is.) When three are in that sign, they are called a **triple** Leo (or whatever the sign is).

⁶ A *square* involves two planets that are three signs apart. Such signs are at odds with one another and do not easily agree on preferences and modes of behavior. For instance, Aries and Cancer are square, as are Taurus and Leo.

Note that in both cases a strong hint of the suppressed planet comes through in a disguised way. On the unconscious level, a suppressed planet is still very active, appearing in toxic and self-defeating behavior patterns. There are healthy channels for resolving the Mars-Neptune conflict—for instance, in becoming an advocate for the downtrodden—but it is unhealthy to dismiss one of the planets and glorify the other.

When you have two planets in conflict with each other, or when your Sun or Moon clashes with your Ascendant, what can you do? First, stop making judgements! The two characteristics or needs that conflict with one another are both valid parts of yourself. They are neither intrinsically good nor bad, they just *are*. In order to find health, balance, and a degree of comfort, we must be fully aware of the needs and drives represented by both sides of the conflict and learn to satisfy both.



I once did a chart reading for a woman with her Sun in Capricorn and her Moon in Aquarius. True to her Capricorn Sun, she took on enormous responsibilities and drove herself to exhaustion, never taking a vacation. Meanwhile, her Moon in Aquarius yearned for freedom...to break away from her demanding work schedule, do unconventional things, and get free of all those responsibilities. The conflict was affecting her health. I explained the tension between the two signs to



her and wrote a realistic looking prescription: "*Rx: One free weekend a month, getting away from it all.*" She was so relieved at getting permission to take care of her own needs that she framed it and faithfully refills her prescription each month.

By becoming familiar with all the features of your chart, you will know yourself better. Recognize that each feature represents a valid piece of your psyche that exists and must find expression. Repression or dismissal of some facet of yourself is only asking for trouble—emotional or physical trouble or else "trouble" from the outside world that you collude in inviting. Perhaps you can accept yourself more fully if you understand the positive potential of each planet, sign, house, and aspect. If your Mars in Scorpio in the third house lacks tact—and in fact can be downright caustic in unguarded moments—you can consciously work on that, but this placement also gives you a keen, analytical mind...a precious gift, for sure.

Some *self-dislike* can be valid...if you are primarily living out the negative side of some planet or sign in your chart. But disliking some quality in yourself and then going to work on it is a far healthier response than brooding on it and letting it grow to self-hatred. Self-hate and guilt are immobilizing and non-productive. Working toward a positive expression of difficult chart features will change your self-image and promote self-love.

Realize, however, that we function at many different levels—vibrant and life affirming in some areas some of the time, self-defeating in other areas at other times. Some of us may develop more quickly in mental areas (Mercury, Uranus) than in emotional areas (Moon, Neptune), while others might develop more fully in the relationship areas (Venus) first. Therefore, it doesn't make sense to judge ourselves harshly or to compare ourselves to others. It is unrealistic to expect perfection, and it is completely human to regress temporarily in times of stress in order to get grounded again and to recharge before taking another forward step.



Another source of self-hatred lies in faulty definitions. It is the reverse of that old joke: "He says I'm stingy; I say I'm a good manager." We often define ourselves in negative and uncharitable ways, not realizing that others may regard as strengths the very qualities we view as weaknesses. The oyster, for all we know, may regard that pearl as a hideous deformity, while we regard it as a precious jewel. Likewise, a person with Mercury in Taurus may regard it as a defect that her thinking is very concrete; others may consider her refreshingly down to earth and sensible. It's all in your definitions. That's why it can be quite helpful, even for an advanced student of astrology, to have a chart done several times by humanistic astrologers who can provide different perspectives and foster a more positive self-definition.

How Weaknesses Become Strengths

Take a long view also. **Qualities that start off as weaknesses often develop into tremendous strengths, as we try hard to compensate for them.** This is often the case, for example, with the house and sign your Saturn falls in, since Saturn shows areas where we grow in the course of maturing through diligent hard work and self-discipline. We need to periodically re-define ourselves. By hard work, you may have already overcome some of your weaknesses, and so let your consciousness catch up with your growth. Or, you may still be in the process of overcoming some of them—since we are always in process—but at least acknowledge how far you've come.

Other traits that we regard as weaknesses are the consequences of focus and specialization. The more time and energy we devote to any single pursuit, the less we have for other pursuits, purely as a matter of course. Especially prone to specialization are people with a *stellium*⁷ in one sign or house, or with the Sun and Moon in one sign or house, or who have most of their planets in one segment of the chart.

If you have a chart like this, you will find a great deal of your energy concentrated in one area of life. Naturally, you will develop more skill and ability in that area of concentration and therefore may be lacking in other areas our culture defines as desirable or important. Why berate yourself for those lacks? Only by specialization and devotion can you achieve something really worthwhile.

Many of the greatest talents of our time are considered rather one-sided because they devote so much time to practicing their art. Should they hate themselves for being one-sided? That's as silly as a great neurosurgeon hating himself because he can't pull teeth. For instance, I sometimes regret that I can't paint or draw, but I paint and draw with words—that is where I have chosen to concentrate my efforts. In my case, the stellium is in Gemini, a sign that is highly verbal and communicative.

Self-hatred can also be an inversion of self-love. "Look at me! I'm so TERRIBLE! I'm the biggest monster on earth!" How very important that makes you, doesn't it? Neptunians often fall into this pattern—or Pisces-Leo combinations like my "meek" double Leo friend, who loved to dramatize her sense of worthlessness. I asked a question in a poem once that I still think is a good one: "Why is true humility so foreign to the self-hating?" Find some other way to be important besides being miserable.

⁷ A stellium is a combination of three or more planets placed within a narrow range of the zodiac, each no more than 8-10° from the next. This makes the planets involved act in concert with one another, becoming a very powerful influence.

If you can admit that you sometimes behave in self-defeating ways, start now to overcome these patterns. For myself, I began working on my Pluto very early in my astrological studies—as soon as Isabel Hickey's books pointed out the negative ways I was expressing it! (My colleagues, none too kindly, used to refer to me as Our Lady of Pluto.) After 35 years of diligent attention to self-improvement in these areas, I can say I have made progress—by no means perfection, but certainly progress!



It's true that healing or therapy may be needed to overcome some of our astrological baggage, but begin by understanding your natal chart in depth. It is a priceless tool for gaining perspective on the self and for finding the roots of conflict and self-defeat within us. In discovering sources of self-defeat and self-hatred in your chart, you will free the life-affirming facets of your being to work more openly. By accepting all parts of yourself over time and allowing them positive expression, you can become a healthy, fully integrated person.

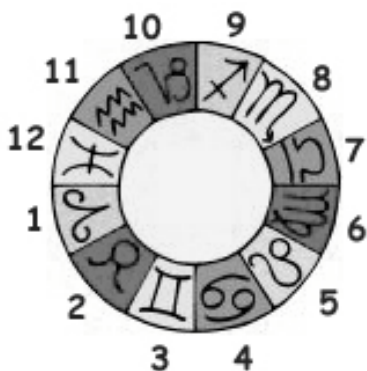


THE SUN—CENTER OF OUR BEING

Popular astrology deals with Sun signs, and it is common among professional astrologers to discount any exploration of the zodiac as "Sun Sign Astrology." Astrologers are both right *and* wrong in doing this. They are *right* in that the complete natal chart must be drawn up for a true and thorough understanding of the individual and *wrong* in belittling the importance of the Sun. The Sun is the center of our solar system from which all life in this system has evolved. Similarly, the Sun in our charts is the center of our being and the origin of our own life force. Its zodiac sign is crucial in forming our character and tells a great deal about us. We will not be exploring Sun signs in this book, since your own previous exploration of the twelve signs is somewhat of a prerequisite, but this chapter is devoted to understanding the role the Sun plays in our charts and our lives.

When Your Sun Sign Doesn't Fit

Many people who are new to astrology can see how other people's Sun signs fit them, but are puzzled that their own sign doesn't ring true. This sort of discrepancy can result in a skeptic's prejudice against astrology. **The truth is, the Sun's zodiac sign can be modified—even over-shadowed—by a number of other factors in the birth chart that alter the Sun's nature.** Two of the strongest modifications come about through the **house the Sun is placed in and any major aspects¹ to it.** Later on, we will devote lengthy chapters to the houses and aspects and their place in interpreting the total chart. Here it is only important to understand what these features are and how they modify the Sun.



BASIC WHEEL AND
SIGNS ASSOCIATED
WITH THE 12 HOUSES

Briefly, the birth chart is divided into twelve pie-shaped wedges called **houses**, (see the diagram below) each of which is similar in nature to a particular sign and planet. Each house represents a number of related areas of life (e.g. the seventh house represents marriage, business partnerships, and other committed relationships).

Why, you may wonder, is it important to find out which house your Sun inhabits? **Each house is associated with a sign of the zodiac, being similar to that sign in terms of the major interests and concerns they share.** For example, people with the Sun in the

¹ As mentioned in Chapter 1, an *aspect* is created when two planets form an angle like 60°, 90°, or 180° apart that indicates a particular type of interaction between the two planets—their energies are blended. Some common aspects include the *square* (90°), and *opposition* (180°), which are difficult blends, while the *trine* (120°) and *sextile* (60°) are harmonious.

second house have a touch of Taurus, in that they share Taurus' concern with finances. Depending on the Sun's actual sign, they may or may not be as commonsensical as the earth sign Taurus, but they are required to put a good deal of energy into earning a living and managing their finances. A person with Sun in Pisces but in the second house might be more grounded financially than the average Pisces would be, but would have much more difficulty in remaining down to earth and commonsensical than the average Taurus. As you can see, the result is a blend of the two signs, though the actual Sun sign is the stronger of the two influences.

If you have a copy of your birth chart, scan it to find out the house where the symbol for the Sun, shown at the left, is placed. Inside each house in the diagram, you will see an astrological symbol for one of the twelve zodiac signs. For instance, in the house next to the number 1, you will find the glyph for Aries, the first sign of the zodiac. In house two, you will find the glyph for Taurus, the second sign of the zodiac. The numbering and sign correspondence continues all the way around to the twelfth house and its associated sign Pisces. For those who are not yet familiar with the glyphs, here is the list in table form²:



House 1 is similar to Aries	House 7 is similar to Libra
House 2 is similar to Taurus	House 8 is similar to Scorpio
House 3 is similar to Gemini	House 9 is similar to Sagittarius
House 4 is similar to Cancer	House 10 is similar to Capricorn
House 5 is similar to Leo	House 11 is similar to Aquarius
House 6 is similar to Virgo	House 12 is similar to Pisces

Blending together the qualities of the Sun's sign and house would help you understand more about your basic character. For example, people with the Sun in the fourth house may share some qualities of the sign Cancer, since their homes, families, and roots are a major focus of energy and effort. Depending on the actual Sun sign, they may or may not share other well-known Cancerian qualities like emotionality, moodiness, or attachment to the past—Sun in Aquarius in the fourth, for instance, would definitely not be hung up in the past. As for those with a seventh house Sun, there would be some common ground with the sign Libra, in that relationships would be a major concern. Each of the other sign/house pairings shares a similar connection. We will learn about the houses in depth in Chapter 13. (Use the bookmark at the side of this page to skip ahead to that chapter if you like and read about the house where your Sun is located.)

A second modification has to do with major aspects to the Sun. You will learn much more about the various aspects in Chapter 14, but here let's focus on the most powerful of aspects, the conjunction, in which two planets stand within an 8-10° range of one another in the zodiac. When a planet is conjunct the Sun, it is such a powerful influence that the Sun's sign can almost be eclipsed. For instance, Pluto is the planet connected with the sign Scorpio—more properly called the ruler of Scorpio. When

² This practice of equating the planets, houses, and signs was popularized by Dr. Zipporah Dobyns, who taught her system to several generations of today's astrologers. Many of Dr. Dobyns' ground-breaking books are still in print through Astro Communications Services at <http://www.astrocom.com>.

people have Pluto conjunct the Sun, regardless of the sign, there is more than a hint of Scorpio about them. They can be intensely emotional, highly focused on power and how it is used, and no doubt passionate. In fact, someone guessing their sign might name Scorpio rather than the actual Sun sign. Likewise, people with Saturn conjunct the Sun would tend to have many qualities in common with the sign Saturn rules, Capricorn. They will be concerned with long-range goals, wanting to perfect themselves, and possibly even as cautious and perfectionistic as the textbook Capricorn.

For the remaining trios of signs, houses, and planets, refer back to the table given in Chapter One. Hopefully this explanation will have cleared up a part of the mystery for those of you who haven't been able to identify fully with your Sun sign.

The Sun as a Celestial Body

If we look at the astronomical facts about our Sun, we gain support for the assertion that it is the most important factor in our charts. The Sun contains 99.9% of all matter in the solar system—the planets, their moons, the asteroids, comets, and meteors all together comprise only .1%! The weight of the Sun is 700 times greater than the combined weights of all the planets. Thus the sheer immensity of the Sun dwarfs any other part of the solar system, and the Sun in our chart represents that immense influence.



There can be no life in our solar system without the Sun, and there can be no Sun without hydrogen. Hydrogen is the basic building material out of which stars such as our Sun are formed. Other matter is then produced by nuclear reactions inside the star. Incredibly high temperatures fuse hydrogen into helium, then into increasingly more complicated elements. Hydrogen and helium make up 99% of all matter, and the process of changing hydrogen into helium takes up 99% of the lifetime of a star, while the remaining elements are formed in the last 1% of its life span as a star.



Hydrogen, then, is the basic matter out of which all other matter is formed. It is the simplest of all atoms, a single electron circling a nucleus of one neutron and one proton. I found the diagram of a hydrogen atom and was stunned to see that it looks exactly like the glyph for the Sun. Significantly, scientists designate hydrogen as element *No. 1* and place it centrally in the table of elements, just as numerology assigns the number *1* to the Sun. Burning hydrogen keeps the Sun alive, and billions of years from now when its hydrogen is gone, it will collapse in on itself and die. The Sun's heat and light gained from burning hydrogen are what keep us alive. The Sun itself is alive, according to old-time occultists like Vera Stanley Alder. They teach that the stars and planets are living beings, evolved to an extent we cannot conceive of. Most scientists regard occultists and mystics as foolish, yet the borders of modern science—especially quantum physics—are evolving in increasingly mystical directions.

Scientists are discovering that all systems—from single atoms, to cells, to solar systems, to entire galaxies—are organized in the same way. There is a center or nucleus around which all other matter in the system revolves. This principle is shown clearly in the ancient symbol for the Sun, which proves to be a timeless diagram for the understanding of life. It strikes me that when the Bible says that God made man in His own image, it may not be talking about a man-shaped God at all. Instead it may refer to the fact that all life operates out of this same principle of matter revolving around a nucleus, including the atoms and cells that make up the human body.

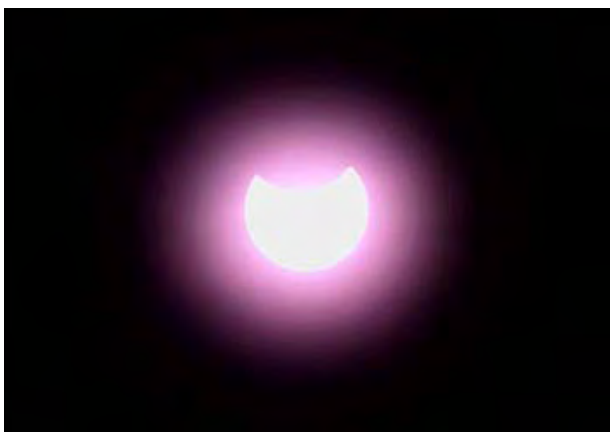


If all things in life revolve around their center, so must we. In order to live fully and develop our best potential, we must be *centered*. To be centered is to act out of the innermost depths of our being, out of a sure and comfortable knowledge of who we are. Just as the Sun is the center of the solar system, the Sun in our charts symbolizes our personal center. Studying its sign, house, and aspects can help us find ourselves. Ignoring the Sun in your chart is risking the loss of that center around which everything in our lives must revolve. A good centering technique is to meditate on the Sun symbol itself, focusing on it until you feel yourself drawing deep inside. It is like a simplified mandala³. (The potent symbol for the Sun will have a section all its own, but it is hard to talk about the Sun at all without referring to its symbol.)



To be centered is not the same as being self-centered, as many people with prominent Sun or Leo placements can be. When we are children, we believe that every thing revolves around us. We exist in a state that psychologists call *infantile omnipotence*. That is, we believe ourselves to be the center of our universe, that we create everything that comes to us, and that everything exists only for us. In short, we believe we are God. Actually, we ARE God, but so is everyone and everything else in the universe. (The Sun rules Leo, and Leos often retain a lifelong belief that everything revolves around them.)

The Sun remains the center of our solar system because of gravity. The force of gravity is the weakest of the forces holding our universe together, yet the Sun's gravity is so strong (28 times that of the earth) that it keeps all the planets in orbit around it. Every planet in our chart also orbits around our own Sun, and its in-drawing force should keep



the Sun the center of our lives, rather than letting one of the other planets take over. To be centered elsewhere than in your Sun or to let one of the planets assume more importance than the Sun leads us to become *eccentric* (literally, off-center) or self-defeating.

We can gain insight by thinking about the phenomena associated with the Sun. Eclipses were greatly feared in antiquity; today nobody much is afraid of them

³ A *mandala* is a circular design common in Asian religions that symbolically conveys the Universe, the totality, the deity, and wholeness.

except those astrologers who see them as "afflictions" of great portent. Since solar eclipses occur in predictable series of 2-5 a year, astronomers prepare well in advance and travel to those spots on earth where the eclipse will be total. During a solar eclipse, they collect information about the Sun's atmosphere and composition. The Sun in our charts represents both the ego and the basic self. Just as it takes an eclipse to show us the true nature of the Sun, we often learn most about our own true nature in times of stress when the ego is temporarily darkened or shut out.

Sunspots are an interesting phenomenon that occurs in regular cycles. A sunspot is a dark area that crosses the face of the Sun and creates magnetic storms on the earth. An astrological colleague, Robert Knight, explained sunspots to me by likening them to acne on the Sun's surface--places where the Sun's grainy surface protrudes from underneath. This analogy interested me because metaphysically skin disturbances represent identity problems, and we get the most acne as teenagers, when we are least sure of who we are. The Sun in our charts represents our basic identity.

This exploration of the Sun as a celestial body should demonstrate that it is by far the most potent force in the solar system and in our charts. As stars go, the Sun may be fairly small and faint, but we couldn't exist without it. The Sun is the only real source of light in our solar system; the light of the planets is only reflected sunlight. If you want to find the true source of light in your own life, focus and meditate on the Sun in your chart.

The Sun Glyph and Its Power



The glyph for the Sun is the most powerful of all astrological symbols and the richest in meaning. I taught astrology in a center for the treatment of alcoholism and once devoted an entire session to this symbol. We kept pushing deeper and deeper to see what lessons we could learn from its form and shape, and we finally reached such a profound level of understanding that several of the men were moved to tears. I only hope I can recapture some of the spirit of that session with you.

The symbol for the Sun is at least 50,000 years old and most likely a great deal older than that.⁴ The evidence for this comes from tablets discovered in Mexico by archaeologists, who place the tablets in the tertiary geological era because of the conditions that surround them. On the tablets, the symbol stood for the Sun, which was worshipped as the god named *Ra*. In later tablets, the symbol also represented the king; powerful kings were given the title *Ra* and regarded as divine. This equation of the king with the Sun/Godhead is seen in many countries and many eras—in the Egyptian Pharaohs, in the Sun kings of China, and in the European concept of the divine right of kings. In astrology, the Sun rules the regal sign, Leo. Interestingly, the outer layer of the Sun is called the *corona* (Latin for crown) because of its crown-like protrusions.

In occult symbolism, the circle represents totality, infinity, eternity, and all there is. The dot in the middle of the Sun symbol indicates a specific point, place, individual, or time within that totality. Yet we never experience a true totality, because there is always

⁴ Bans Stefan Santesson, *Understanding MU*, Paperback Library, N.Y., 1970, p. 51.



something greater. For instance, the glyph could represent an atom, the dot being the nucleus. If you were an electron, that atom would seem to stretch to infinity. It could also represent a cell; from the nucleus, your boundaries would seem to stretch to infinity, yet there are millions of cells in one human being.

From the point of view of a human being in our solar system, the sun seems to stretch to infinity, yet there are at least 100 billion solar systems in our galaxy, which is so vast that our Sun takes 200 million years to rotate around the galaxy's center. Galaxies are not even the outer limits of Creation, because they occur in clusters of up to 10,000 and are very likely to be revolving around some vast, undiscovered center. My favorite playpen on the Internet is the Astronomy Picture of the Day, which abounds in images of galaxies, nebulas, and other astronomical phenomena. A session spent looking at their archives helps us grasp the vastness of creation. (Visit it at: <http://antwrp.gsfc.nasa.gov/apod/archivepix.html>)

In addition to all the systems traced above, the astrological Sun represents the self. It therefore is a symbolic confirmation that we are part of All That Is, as well as a pointed reminder that there are far greater things in the universe than we can ever know. We are divine, yet miniscule. If the dot in the center represents us, the circle that represents totality shows that we are separate, yet one with everything there is.

For the person who is heavily self-centered, however, that circle represents a wall between the self and all that is—a separation from the oneness. In astrological symbolism, the circle is also said to represent spirit. The dot in the circle is the center of our being, the soul, so the Sun symbol reminds us that we are spiritual at the core of our being. The dot is surrounded by spirit, and God is all around us. The circle is a boundary or ring that keeps us from getting lost, and we can never escape our spirituality.

Leaving behind traditional symbolism and letting intuition go to work, the symbol for the Sun also suggests an egg. The egg is another source of life force out of which something develops. The egg is dormant, yet once fertilized contains all that is needed to produce an adult. The egg represents the total potential of an individual, and so does the Sun in the chart. Our oneness with all life is seen in the course of development of the human embryo, for it goes through stages of looking like an amoeba, a fish, a reptile and a bird, before passing into an irrevocably human form about seven weeks after conception.



Another idea the symbol makes me think of is a target with a bull's-eye, and the Sun in our charts is what we aim for. This is another reminder that we must focus and center ourselves if we want to hit the target. It is also like looking down into a funnel or tunnel, both of which require concentration if we need to remain in the center.

The Sun symbol also looks like the human eye. The eyes are said to be the windows of the soul and are especially revealing of the person's true character and intent. Likewise the Sun in the chart represents the soul and the true character. The Sun in the chart is both the I AM and the ego. The ego can get in the way of real self-development. If you are

too self-centered, you lose sight of the spiritual center, the I AM.

Then, too, the symbol reminds me of a rapidly spinning wheel. The Wheel of Fortune and the Mayan Wheel of Incarnation come to mind. The circle reminds us that life is cyclical and that history is always repeating itself. The dot in the center shows that the only way to get off the wheel is to become centered in spirit. I believe that the sign, house, and aspects of the Sun in the chart show the most important tasks and goals of this soul in this particular incarnation and the place where the greatest development can occur.

As you can see, the Sun symbol is extremely rich in meaning. What we've discerned so far is not the totality, but only the egg. If you keep meditating on this symbol, still deeper levels of meaning may unfold.

UNDERSTANDING THE MOON – REFLECTIONS ON DIANA¹



Is there any object in the sky more beautiful and fascinating than the Moon? It was an object of worship to ancient people all over the world who felt the influence of the Moon's phases on the earth and its creatures. Recently some of the "superstitions" about the Moon have become respectable, as scientists, sociologists, and policemen discover their validity. In astrology, too, we recognize the strong influence of the Moon on the individual, whether it is through gravity, some

mystical force, or something as yet unknown. In Western astrology, the Moon is considered second only to the Sun in shaping our character. In Vedic astrology, the ancient astrological wisdom of India, it is given even greater weight than the Sun.

Moon Symbolism, Moon Worship and Women

The symbol for the Moon in astrology and other areas of the occult is the most recognizable of any glyph, but have you wondered why that particular phase of the moon—called the waxing crescent—was chosen? Why not one of the other phases? In her fascinating book, *Women's Mysteries*, Esther Harding said it was because the Moon meant growth and fertility to the ancients, and the waxing crescent was the phase at which the Moon had the most room to grow.² In addition, the New Moon proved to be the best time to plant crops, as it produced the most abundant growth.



As we learned in working with the Sun's symbol, letting your imagination and intuition flow freely when dealing with a pictorial symbol can help you tap into additional meanings. For instance, I once noticed that a radar screen is shaped like the symbol for the Moon. In selecting that shape for radar, scientists unknowingly made use of a truth about one of the Moon's functions. It does act like a radar screen, whereby we scan, receive, and respond to subtle impressions from the outside. This sensitivity and responsiveness gives Moon-dominant people—what I have elsewhere called lunar

¹Parts of this chapter were taken from Donna's article, "Reflections on Diana," *Your Personal Astrology*, 1/74. Reprinted with permission of Sterling Publications © 1974.

² M. Esther Harding, *Women's Mysteries*, Harper, 1971.

types—their strong intuition³.



My astrological mentor, Rod Chase pointed out that boats are shaped like the Moon. Boats hold and protect us—and protectiveness is a function of the Moon. The Moon also describes the way we handle emotions, and this similarity between the Moon and boats taught Rod that the only way to deal with our emotions is to float on them rather than be swallowed up and drown in them.

Symbolism based on the Moon is present in many occult studies. In ancient mythology, the Moon goddess was Diana, who ruled over nature and fertility. Women who wanted children made offerings to her, and pregnant women believed Diana could grant an easy childbirth. She was a very important goddess

and was connected with critical maternal functions. Though I knew about these beliefs from astrology and mythology, I was still surprised to make a discovery while doing progressions⁴ on my natal horoscope. Several times when the Moon made progressed aspects to my Ascendant or Midheaven, or when an outer planet transited my natal Moon, a crucial woman came into my life—and each time the woman was named Diana!



As I experimented with different systems of divination, I was fascinated to find Moon-like images in almost all of them. For instance, numerologists believe that the numeral 2 comes from the symbol for the Moon. The meaning of 2 in numerology is similar to some astrological meanings of the Moon—it is the feminine principle, cooperation, and the helpmate. Numerologically, 2 is emotional and intuitive, like the Moon in astrology. When you break the name Diana down numerologically, it adds up to a 2. That can't be a coincidence.

The Moon and the number 2 are well represented in the Tarot. The number 2 Major Arcana is the High Priestess, who seems related to Diana. This card shows a deeply mysterious woman, schooled in ancient occult wisdom such as Wicca. The crescent Moon is at her feet, and she sits between two pillars representing good and evil. There are four suits in the Tarot deck, and if you analyze all four of the 2s, they seem to express variations of the cooperation-helpmate them—or the lack of it. I also found a Moon-like hexagram in the / *Ching*. Its name is *The Receptive*, and it is made up of all Yin (feminine) lines. This hexagram denotes devotion, complementarity, and the eternal female principle. Significantly, this is hexagram number 2.



³ Lunar types are those with a strong Moon or important chart placements like the Sun, Moon, or Ascendant in Cancer. The Moon is strong in a chart when it is near the Midheaven or Ascendant or when there are many aspects to it.

⁴ In astrology, there are two main ways of looking at life events (future and past), one being transits—the current positions of the outer planets and their impact on the natal chart. The other includes the various kinds of progressions, meaning how the planetary positions unfolded in the days and weeks after birth. In one simple form of progression, called Day for a Year, the positions of the planets on the tenth day after birth correspond to the conditions in your life at age ten. We will not be dealing with progressions here because I don't often use them.

Thus, we find that the Moon has many occult meanings. The book mentioned earlier, *Women's Mysteries*, is extremely important to me, not only for understanding the Moon and its mystical significance, but also for understanding the feminine part of our humanness—whether we are biologically male or female in this lifetime. The book traces the spontaneous and separate growth of Moon religions in all parts of the world and documents how those religions grew and changed as cultures evolved. In all those religions, the Moon was thought to be feminine and to have special importance to women. In another important book of the 1970s, *The First Sex*, Elizabeth Davies provided historical evidence that Moon religions took hold during ancient times when there was a matriarchy, and that the Sun-worshipping religions did not take hold until the patriarchy was established.⁵

After reading *Women's Mysteries* and being captivated by it, I tried an experiment with one of my astrology classes, a group of recovering alcoholics at a treatment center in the Bedford Stuyvesant area of Brooklyn. I asked them to pretend they were an extremely primitive and isolated tribe gathering for the purpose of establishing a religion. They entered deeply into the experiment, assigning themselves roles in the tribe and discarding all knowledge that a primitive person could not gain from observations of nature.

Startlingly, the results of their reasoning matched the thinking of ancient people outlined in Davies' book. They decided to worship the Sun and Moon, neither of which they had control over, and concluded the two celestial bodies were alive because they moved. The Sun was designated male, as it was stronger and more dominant. The Moon was unanimously regarded as female because of its softness, romantic nature, and constant changes. The growth of the Moon and its phases were likened to pregnancy in women and the monthly menstrual cycle.

Rather than rebel at the seeming sexism of my class and of Davies' book in assigning femininity to the Moon, as I once would have, I was forced to conclude that there was something to it. As we will see, the Moon is extremely dominant in the horoscope, so what role should we assign to it in a man's chart? Many old-time astrologers dismissed the Moon in a man's chart as representing the key women in his life.

However, the Moon rules such key psychological functions as emotion and dependency—and it is unhealthy for a man to ignore either of these. Both exist in men as much as in women, but our culture has forced men to repress them—and, overall, that's hard on men. It is better to accept the Moon as being the feminine side of a man's psyche (the *anima*, in Jungian terms), just as Mars represents some of the masculine strivings in a woman's chart. While the male/female dichotomy does exist, we cannot be truly whole until we integrate both.

The Moon and Mothering: What You Give = What You Got

Perhaps the most crucial human function described by the Moon is mothering—the mothering you give and the mothering you received. We'll see that the two are nearly inseparable. A better word for this function is *nurturing*—after all, we can also get care, food,



⁵ Elizabeth Davies, *The First Sex*, Penguin Books, 1972.

and love from our fathers and other people. As adults, many men do take care of others (friends and relatives, as well as children). This is one of the functions of the Moon in a man's chart, though it is often suppressed or disguised in Western culture.

When the first edition of this book was written, most people had a traditional upbringing in which the biological mother filled the lunar functions, so the Moon in the chart would have been read as the mother. Given the entry of the vast majority of women into the workplace, today's children often have a variety of caretakers of greater and lesser commitment to meeting their basic needs, and so the Moon might refer to any number of significant caretakers. The Moon describes how well we take care of others and gratify their needs, and how well we accept those same needs in ourselves. Can we accept feeling dependent and work to get those needs met? And, similarly, how do we respond when others are dependent on us?

With a Moon in Cancer, for instance, dependency is often strong. These individuals may be extremely dependent on others and show it; or, conversely, they may hide their own dependency, consciously or unconsciously, by compulsively caretaking others. The catch here is that this mother-to-the-world pose can leave them drained and feeling even more needy. A Moon in Aries person, on the other hand, places a high value on independence and has a very low tolerance for other people's dependency. Caretaking gets in the way of all those bright, shiny new projects they want to work on.



Psychology teaches us that our attitude toward dependency in others and ourselves comes directly from our parents, particularly our mothers. If the parent dealt with dependency in a loving but balanced way—neither over-protective nor neglectful—then we will also be able to handle dependency appropriately. People with a Moon/Saturn aspect or Moon in Capricorn may have had a mother who was dutiful but cold toward their needs and who pushed them to grow up too fast. Individuals with Moon/Neptune aspects or Moon in Pisces may have had a parent who was outwardly sympathetic to their needs but who was oddly elusive when the chips were down. Both of these Moon signs might experience the same difficulty in responding to others that their parents did.

Like it or not, we generally become the kind of parents our parents were. If we are psychologically aware, we may vow to raise our children differently than we were raised. Nonetheless, when children actually come along, we are often dismayed to find ourselves sounding and acting just like our own parents. Why is this? The Moon represents patterns, habits, and memories from our earliest years, many of which are unconscious. We live what we learn, and one of the lessons we learn from our parents is how to be a parent. Since that learning is mainly unconscious or *preverbal*—that is, it happens before the infant is able to think in words—such patterns are resistant to rational control. Children who were abused, for instance, may be dismayed to find abusive urges arising when they themselves become parents or caretakers of children.

The Moon also rules our basic sense of security, which early parenting influences in crucial but unconscious ways. It comes from the way the infant is held, fed, and responded to when crying—whether all these things are done with love, with anxiety, with indifference, or even with hostility. In infancy, we are dependent on our parents for

our very survival. Thus the type of parenting we get at this stage shapes our attitude toward the world we live in. Is it a safe place or a hostile one? Do we feel lovable? Do we feel wanted or barely tolerated? An analysis of the Moon in our charts will answer these questions. In the preverbal stage we either develop or fail to develop **basic trust**, according to the classic theories of psychoanalyst Erik Erikson. Basic trust means that we find the world and the people in it good and trustworthy. This stage has a potent effect on our ability to allow other people to be close to us and on our over-all orientation to life.

A person with the Moon in Scorpio, for example, might have learned very early not to trust. The parent may have pretended concern and caring (even to the point of being over-protective), but there was often some other, less loving motivation behind it. Many times, the parent was manipulative and controlling, while pretending to have only the best interests of the child at heart. Thus, the child learned to be suspicious and, in self-defense, to second-guess others to discover their real motivations. As an adult, the person often adopts some of the parents' controlling patterns of behavior in order to maintain a sense of security and control over an unpredictable world.

In contrast, the person with Moon in Taurus, unless the Moon has difficult aspects, had more positive nurturing. The parents were stable and accepted the child's needs. They were more forthright, not so hard to understand or so emotionally intense as with the Moon in Scorpio. As a result, the child grows up secure and feeling that he and the world are basically okay. (Naturally, other aspects in the chart can modify this.) Taurus is the sign traditionally thought to be the best placement for the Moon—its "exaltation." The Moon in Taurus has its drawbacks also, such as inflexibility when faced with change, but for a sense of basic trust and security, it is a good sign.

The Moon in your chart shows the conditions under which you would feel most emotionally secure—different for each of us. The house position of the Moon reveals more detail about conditions that lend a sense of security. A person with the Moon in the eleventh house would feel most secure when surrounded by friends or in some meaningful group. Someone with the Moon in the seventh usually only feels secure when involved in a long-term, intimate relationship.



The sign and house position can conflict—to have it in Aquarius means there is security in freedom and change. The Moon in Aquarius in the fourth had better invest in a mobile home, because Aquarius can feel stifled by putting down roots. Many people judge themselves harshly about the things that make them feel secure. For example, the Moon in Aquarius in the fourth person may say, "It's bad for me to be so restless." Astrology can help you recognize those needs as valid and important and can help you set out to meet them.

Generally, the Moon's sign, house, and aspects will describe your actual mother—to the extent that sometimes the child's Moon sign is the same as mother's Sun sign. What is interesting, however, is that children in the same family may have vastly different Moons. In one family, for instance, the older brother and sister both have their Moon in Aries, but the younger sister has her Moon in Scorpio. The older children were both encouraged to be independent (Aries), but at the time the younger sister was born, the mother nearly died. (Scorpio is sometimes associated with death.) For that reason,

perhaps, the quality of the relationship between the mother and the younger sister was very different. She was pampered, overprotected, and called "Baby Doll" up to the time she was 14. We can speculate that the mother unconsciously resented that child for bringing her so close to death, but covered up this feeling through overprotection and pampering.

Why do these discrepancies in Moon signs in the same family occur? What the Moon describes is not the actual mother, but the child's experience of her. That is, it doesn't show the mother as a total person separate from the child, but only the child's-eye view of her. Parents cannot treat all children alike—some children are better loved, some rub them the wrong way, and some remind them of people they love or hate. Then, too, conditions in the home can change or the mother herself may change for the better or worse, and this changes the quality of mothering.

You can actually trace the history of a family through the sequence of Moons in the offspring. For instance, an early child or two may have a well-aspected Moon in Taurus, showing a warm and giving relationship with the mother. After the birth of a third child, however, perhaps economic conditions force the mother to go to work. Perhaps that child is born with Moon in Capricorn, showing that the mother is now more serious and intent on business, with less time to give the children when the work day is finished. There are still similarities—both Taurus and Capricorn are earth signs—but the third child doesn't experience as much warmth from the mother, and isn't allowed to be a baby long enough. Because she is worn out from working, the mother pushes the child to grow up and be less of a burden.

To take another example, sometimes a child with Moon in Libra (or other crucial placements in that sign) is conceived because the mother feels it will cement a marriage that is breaking apart (or, if not yet married, in hopes that it will induce the man to marry her). This strategy rarely works, because in reality a new baby puts considerable stress on a relationship, even one that is going well. So, if an already-strained relationship breaks up or becomes more distant, the mother often will turn to her Moon in Libra child for the love and closeness she is missing from the child's father. The child then grows up needing that kind of constant closeness and being strongly motivated to form relationships. This may be a person who can't stand to be alone—it makes him or her insecure and unhappy.

The Moon and Emotions

The Moon in our chart also shows our emotions and how we deal with them, as well as how we respond to the emotions of those around us. This, again, relates back to the nurturing we had as a very young child. How well our parents responded to our emotional expressions powerfully shapes what emotions we allow ourselves to feel and how we deal with them and with other people's emotions.

We can learn much about the nature of a sign by considering its **element**⁶. In the case of people born with the Moon in an **air sign**



⁶ Based on a medieval system, the zodiac signs are divided into four elements—fire, earth, air, and water. Fire and air work well together (air keeps a fire burning, and fire warms up cold air), but they do not work so well with water or earth. Water and earth complement each other—no crops would grow without both—but they do not work so well with fire and air.

(Gemini, Aquarius, and Libra), the mother may have had some difficulty responding to the child's emotions and tended to detach herself when the child cried or expressed some other emotion the mother found unpleasant. As a result, this child learned to cut off emotions and to be detached from them. It was either that, or lose the mother's love and approval. In an extreme case, this can lead to a person who is detached from most emotions.

Often, with air sign Moons, the mother could handle feelings best on an intellectual basis, asking the child to explain them away or make them rational. (But there is little that is rational about our emotions!) As adults, these people intellectualize feelings rather than being in touch with them. They want to talk away their emotions and the emotions of other people. In some cases, imitative Moon in Gemini people know intellectually that people are "supposed" to have feelings about certain situations, so they counterfeit emotions that aren't really there, in order to be more socially acceptable.

Earth sign Moons (Taurus, Virgo, Capricorn) can also have a certain amount of difficulty in dealing with emotions. (For them, if you can't see it, touch it, or taste it, it isn't real.) Moon in Taurus is fairly accepting of emotions and of nearly everything else, but will work hard to restore serenity. The primary emotion many Moon in Capricorn or Virgo people allow themselves is melancholic self-recrimination over their lack of perfection—an emotion that generally arises from over-critical parents. Nonetheless, earth sign Moons approach emotions on a practical level—they try to find out what's causing the distress and what concrete steps can be taken to alleviate it. For that reason, they can be a Rock of Gibraltar to others who are going through an internal emotional crisis and who, as a result, are having difficulty dealing with the demands of the outside world.

Fire sign Moons (Aries, Leo, and Sagittarius) respond more actively and even sometimes aggressively to challenging situations that confront them in life, including emotions. They instinctively mobilize their defenses to stop what's bothering them or to go after what they need. Anger is an emotion most of us have some degree of difficulty sorting out, but here the fire sign Moons are better off than most, unless there are difficult aspects from planets like Saturn, Pluto, or Neptune. One common lack in fire sign Moons is sensitivity to other people's feelings. They are so eager to pursue their concerns that they may not slow down to consider how others feel about their actions. You first have to get their attention. Then, if you are somehow identified as being part of their entourage (typical of Leo) or if their ego gets involved, they will respond to your emotions the same way they'd respond to their own—"Charge!"



Water, in occult studies, refers to emotions, and **water sign Moons (Cancer, Scorpio, and Pisces)** are often the most emotional of all. Some unsympathetic souls even say they revel in it. With Moon in Cancer or Scorpio, a considerable amount of energy is invested in discovering, experiencing, and digesting emotions. Paradoxically, Moon in Pisces, which is potentially the most emotional, can go to great lengths to escape from unpleasant feelings, in some cases leading to an addictive personality or living in a fantasy world. Water sign Moons are also very sensitive and responsive to other people's feelings. Often, on an intuitive level, they feel what you feel.



A WHO S WHO OF THE TWELVE MOON SIGNS

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Based on a survey of AstroDataBank's celebrity files⁷, here are examples of people born with the Moon in each of the signs of the zodiac. Unlike the Sun signs, which are in effect for a month at a time, the Moon changes signs every 2½ days, so that it moves through the entire zodiac in less than a month. The Moon is as significant a part of your astrological makeup as your Sun sign.

ARIES: Antonio Banderas, Whitney Houston, Martina Navratilova, Emeril LaGasse, Celine Dion, Jamie Lee Curtis, Heather Locklear, Marlon Brando, Ellen Degeneres, Meg Ryan, Randy Travis

TAURUS: Michael J. Fox, Cameron Diaz, Geena Davis, Prince Henry of England, Demi Moore, Isabella Rossellini, Andre Agassi, Prince Charles, Jesse Jackson, Bill Clinton, Monica Lewinsky

GEMINI: Brooke Shields, Roseanne, Goldie Hawn, Colin Quinn, Leonard Nimoy, Chris Noth, Freddie Prinze Jr., Kurt Browning, Dylan McDermott, Steffi Graf, Julianne Moore, Alyssa Milano, George Carlin

CANCER: Willie Nelson, Prince William of England, Sean Penn, Bridget Fonda, Tim Allen, Drew Barrymore, Halle Berry, Keanu Reeves, Dr. Elizabeth Kubler-Ross, Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt

LEO: Tom Cruise, Tom Hanks, Queen Latifah, Julia Roberts, Maria Shriver, Chelsea Clinton, Dolly Parton, Charlotte Church, Marlee Matlin, Patric Swayze, Drew Carey, Anna Kournikova, Tom Selleck

VIRGO: Jodie Foster, Matthew McConaughey, Anne Heche, Willem Dafoe, Lance Armstrong, Serena Williams, Michelle Pfeiffer, Madonna, k.d. lang, Chris Rock, Sophie Rhys-Jones, Bill Cosby

LIBRA: Mel Gibson, Nicolas Cage, Leonardo DiCaprio, Kate Capshaw, Natalie Cole, Amy Irving, Anna Nicole Smith, Vanna White, Nicolai Brown Simpson, Burt Reynolds, George Bush, Sr.

SCORPIO: Eddie Murphy, Whoopi Goldberg, Ben and Casey Affleck, twins Jenna and Barbara Bush, Michelle Kwan, Shaquille O'Neal, Phylicia Rashad, Elizabeth Taylor, Princess Caroline, Lisa Kudrow

SAGITTARIUS: Oprah Winfrey, Christopher Reeve, Michael Jordan, Tiger Woods, Jennifer Anniston, Justin Timberlake, Mariah Carey, Nicolai Kidman, Kevin Costner, Rev. Billy Graham, Rev. Al Sharpton

CAPRICORN: The Dalai Lama, Marianne Williamson, Johnny Depp, Mat Damon, Wynonna Judd, George Clooney, Ron Howard, Kim Basinger, Christina Onassis, Robert Kennedy, Cher, Lucille Ball

AQUARIUS: Bruce Willis, Britney Spears, Conan O'Brien, Denzel Washington, Russell Crowe, Caroline and John F. Kennedy Jr., Tony Blair, Woodrow Wilson, Jean-Paul Sartre, Marilyn Monroe

PISCES: Robin Williams, Michael Jackson, Catherine Zeta-Jones, Ricky Martin, Rush Limbaugh, Winona Ryder, Elvis and Lisa Marie Presley, Martin Luther King and Coretta Scott King, Michelangelo



⁷ For more information about the AstroDataBank software collection of over 26,000 birth data and to get on their mailing list to receive information about the charts of newsmakers, visit their website at <http://www.astrodatabank.com>

The primary difficulty with water sign Moons is that they can get so immersed in their emotions that they lose some of their effectiveness in dealing with the outside world. With emotions, as with most other things in life, we need to strike a balance.

Adding to What You Know about Astrology Going from Sun Signs to Moon Signs

Next to your Sun sign, the Moon in the chart is the strongest influence on who you are. In many cases, in fact, the Moon sign can be more dominant. For instance, given a fire sign Sun (Aries, Leo, or Sagittarius) with a Capricorn Moon, in my observation, the Capricorn Moon will outweigh the fire sign Sun. In many respects, these people often react to life's challenges more like a Capricorn—driven to establish security through success. Unlike the typical fire sign Sun, they will be cautious, serious, even prone to depression, and hard on themselves and others with that typical Capricornian perfectionism.

Look at the Moon signs of people around you, and you may find out why they don't live up to the best—or the worst—of their Sun signs. The table on the previous page shows examples of people born under the twelve Moon signs. If you've been reading and studying about Sun signs for a while, you already have the foundation for understanding how those signs work with the Moon and other planets. There are not only twelve Sun signs, but twelve Moon signs, twelve Venus signs, and so on—the same twelve signs applied to various facets of your self. The Moon represents such basic functions as the emotions, security, the mother's influence, and how we deal with dependency in ourselves and others. Your Moon sign describes how you handle these crucial areas of life.

To begin applying characteristics of the zodiac signs to planets other than the Sun, we will use what astrology teachers call keywords—that is, lists of words or phrases that apply to the sign and planet in question. Begin by making a list of the qualities of the sign involved. For instance, suppose you are trying to understand what someone with Moon in Gemini is like. You may know from reading and observation that typical Geminis are verbal, communicative, quick-witted, insatiably curious, easily bored, restless and changeable, live in their heads, and love to laugh. Then match those qualities with the concerns of the Moon we have explored in this chapter to see how they would mix. Here are some keywords for the two:

Gemini:

live in their heads
insatiably curious
loves to learn
restless
easily bored
quick-witted
witty, loves to laugh

The Moon:

the emotions
mother's influence
mothering
the home base
security
response to crisis
instinctive response

Moon in Gemini:

intellectualizes rather than feels
mom encouraged reading and learning
devours parenting books
might move often
leaves security due to boredom
think on their feet in crisis
quick with repartee

There is much more to Moon in Gemini—and to any Moon sign, for that matter—

than these quick matches through free association can give us, but at least you have an idea of how to begin. Take one from column A and one from column B and see what kinds of insights you come up with about Moon sign and the signs of people close to you.

To conclude this exploration, the Moon in our birth charts is of great significance. If your Moon is placed in a difficult sign such as Capricorn, Scorpio, or Pisces, or if it forms difficult aspects to planets such as to Saturn, Pluto, or Neptune, then serious stresses and challenges may have occurred in early childhood in laying secure foundations or establishing roots. In such a case, dependency and the ability to trust are affected, and the individual may also have difficulty in dealing with emotions in a balanced way. Getting a good understanding of the Moon in any chart is extremely useful⁸. I would, however, add one caution: Don't try this at home!! Get a chart reading from a well-balanced, humanistic astrologer before drawing any dire conclusions about your own parenting ability or your son-in-law's mental health status based on a surface reading of the Moon sign.

⁸ **NOTE:** Want to learn more about the Moon? Donna has been considered an expert on the Moon and its influence in our lives. She wrote two books devoted to the topic: *The Moon in Your Life: Being a Lunar Type in a Solar World*, published in 1996 by Red Wheel/Weiser, and *Moon Signs*, published by Ballantine Books in 1988.

MERCURY AND THE MIND

Mercury, the ruler of Gemini, is the planet governing mental skills, intelligence, verbal abilities, and communication. People with Mercury or Gemini strong in their charts often excel at mental tasks and can charm us with wit and an engaging line of patter—pop astrology warns us, "Don't rely on Gemini." Mercury can also be slick and superficial, but intellect, in its proper place, is a great tool. Let's see if we can find clues as to what that proper place should be.

Like the earth's Moon, Mercury has no atmosphere due to the gravitational pull of its nearby parent, the Sun. Also like our Moon, it has phases; with the proper telescope, you can see a New, Crescent, Half, and Full Mercury. This suggests that the proper place of Mercury (intellect) would be as a satellite to the Sun, which is our basic character or soul. Intellect and verbal ability are valuable when in proper balance to the rest of the being and the body. The Sun is the heart; words and learning are empty and mechanical unless you also have heart. Mercury is tiny compared to the Sun, and intellect is only a small part of the total being. The Sun, not Mercury, is the center of the solar system, and we cannot make the mind the center of our lives without becoming eccentric.



Mercury stands between Venus and the Sun in our solar system, and Mercury (communication) is the bridge between our inner selves (Sun) and other people we want to share with (Venus). Mercury always stays close to the Sun in the zodiac—it is rarely more than 27° from the Sun in our charts and is most often in the same sign and house as the Sun. However, if our thoughts are too wrapped up in ourselves, we create a barrier instead of a bridge. It is interesting how much the symbols for Mercury (above, on the left) and Venus (on the right) look alike—one of my irrepresible students said Mercury was a horny Venus. Venus rules love, and it is hard to sustain an intimate relationship if you can't communicate.



Mercury — the Myth and the Metal

In mythology, Mercury was the messenger of the gods, a speedy guy with wings on his cap and shoes. It is said that thoughts have wings, and our thoughts and words do move swiftly, carrying our messages. Mercury was also the god of commerce and industry, and we cannot carry on business without communicating. Often, however, what advertising and sales people communicate isn't the whole truth but a version of the truth that will sway us. Likewise, the god Mercury was so cunning and clever that thieves of antiquity adopted him as their patron saint. Mercury's tools—words—are as often used to cover up and deceive as they are to exchange and communicate. Mercurial people, too, can be

somewhat amoral in using their skill with words.



Besides being a planet in our solar system and a mythological god, mercury is a metal, and a very peculiar one at that. It is liquid in form, yet doesn't really behave like water. If you pour it out on a table, it won't leave any traces of wetness. Instead, it forms into little silvery balls and runs in all directions. Because of its sensitivity to changes in temperature and pressure, mercury is used in thermometers, barometers, and blood pressure instruments.

Mercurial people are similar to the metal in many ways. Fluid, adaptable, and changeable, they respond easily and quickly to the changes in the social climate around them. (This group includes not only Gemini Sun, Moon, or Ascendant, but also those with many aspects to Mercury in their charts or with several planets in the third house of the chart, the house of communication.)

Another common name for the metal mercury is *quicksilver*. Both *quicksilver* and *mercurial* are words that have been used to describe fast-moving, fast-talking, and ever-changing individuals. The metal runs off in all directions when you pour it, and mercurial types are restless and distractible, with a tendency to scatter themselves. Scattering doesn't hurt the metal mercury, nor does it seem to hurt mercurial people—they have the ability to bring all those scattered bits of data together and make connections between them, just as the droplets of mercury readily coalesce. Then, too, going off in all directions is one sure way not to get stuck in the mud! Mercury people get exposure to many different points of view and have a broader exposure to a variety of experiences and ideas than do most other people. As a result, many are interesting conversationalists and have a seemingly unlimited capacity for mental growth.

Mercurial people can appear quite sensitive and responsive to other people. However, it is a very different sort of sensitivity than we find in the water signs—Pisces, Cancer, or Scorpio. (In astrology and other occult sciences, water stands for feelings.) Mercurial sensitivity consists mainly of perceiving and comprehending with intellect rather than with emotion, which mercurial people tend to run away from rather than face. However, the capacity for rational thought also keeps us from drowning in emotions, helping us keep a rational perspective on our more irrational feelings. In counseling or mentoring situations, particularly, both parties need a strong Mercury for the awareness and insight that can result from verbal exchanges such as these.

The metal mercury readily takes on the shape of anything it comes into contact with. Dip a dime in mercury, and it adheres to all the little grooves and surfaces of the coin. Likewise Mercury people instinctively mimic others, consciously or unconsciously. The knack of mimicry is often a source of humor and delight. Improvisational genius and talk show host Wayne Brady is brilliant at doing imitations, and he has Mercury conjunct the Sun in Gemini.¹ Drew Carey, Wayne's boss on "Whose Line is it, Anyway," also has Sun in Gemini, with Mercury strongly placed in the sixth house but on the angle.



¹ Wayne Brady was born June 7, 1972, and Drew Carey was born May 23, 1958.

The Mercurial type's propensity for mimicry is true of more profound patterns of behavior as well. When they are with you, they may take on your thinking and behavior, so that they seem as much like you as an identical twin (Gemini's symbol). However, when they leave you, the droplets of mercury coalesce and adhere to the surface of the next social contact. This tendency for mimicry gives them the capacity for mixing well with all kinds of people and adapting to all kinds of situations, rather than just being stuck in their original cultural background.

Mercury is used extensively in switches and other electrical devices because it is a good conductor of electricity. It is the heaviest liquid (13 times as heavy as water), and its fluidity creates less friction and resistance in the electron flow than solid metals. So, too, do the verbal skills and charm of Mercury people allow them to move fluidly around all different social circles without creating resistance and friction. Their gift of gab cuts down on the friction that differences of opinion or background might create.

Mercury—Medicine and Mirth



One of the most common uses of the metal mercury traditionally has been in medicine. It was used in *mercurochrome* and other disinfectants, in certain medicinal compounds, and in dental work; yet mercury and many of its compounds are poisonous—as some people with mercury fillings have found out. The god Mercury, too, was connected with medicine in the eyes of the ancients. His staff, with its two curled serpents, is still used as a symbol of the medical profession.



It has been said that laughter is the best medicine, and the planet Mercury is the astrological ruler of wit and humor. Over the past several decades, a new branch of healing has developed called humor therapy², which is showing excellent results with seriously ill patients. It arose from the experience of Norman Cousins, editor of *Saturday Review* magazine, during the 1960s, when he developed *ankylosing spondylitis*, an extremely painful and crippling type of arthritis.

Although his doctors offered little hope of a full recovery, Cousins began to investigate whether humor and other positive emotions could help him heal. He surrounded himself with humor, watching comedies in his hospital room, and found that half an hour of laughter would give him two hours of restful sleep. He did this every day as often as possible, and was fully recovered within six months of starting this treatment. His book about this experience, *Anatomy of an Illness*, encouraged others to

² Information in this section is derived from a web-based site on humor therapy at: http://www.wholehealthmd.com/refshelf/substances_view/1,1525,10152,00.html. To find out more about humor therapy, contact one of the organizations that promote it. Two other organizations, the Association for Applied and Therapeutic Humor and the American Association for Therapeutic Humor (<http://www.aath.org/>) offer training in "caring comedy."

investigate the healing power of humor.

At around the same time, pediatrician "Patch" Adams took bedside humor to therapeutic extremes by wearing a clown costume while making his hospital rounds. Adams, the subject of a 1999 movie starring Robin Williams, says, "Joy is more important than any other drug." His Gesundheit! Institute in Washington, D.C. is dedicated to promoting humor as an adjunct therapy. Adams has Sun in Mercury-ruled Gemini conjunct zany Uranus, the planet of mavericks and gadflies.

Following the lead of Adams and Cousins, medical researchers began to investigate the effects on laughter on the body. Several studies demonstrated that laughter triggers the release of endorphins, chemicals that not only help block pain but produce a general sense of well-being. Researchers at Loma Linda University did a long-term study of beneficial effects of laughter on the immune system and found a significant drop in levels of adrenalin and other stress hormones, after participants watched a 60-minute comedy. (Stress hormones can corrupt the immune system and weaken its ability to fight disease.) Laughter also raises levels of infection-fighting T-cells, disease-fighting proteins called gamma-interferon, and B-cells, which produce disease-destroying antibodies. Laughter also increases breathing, oxygen use, and heart rate, so it stimulates the circulatory system and temporarily lowers the blood pressure.

Studying the charts of comedians confirms the association of Mercury with humor. Some of them have Sun, Moon, or rising sign in Gemini, but even more often, the Sun is [conjunct Mercury](#)³. For instance, Woody Allen has Sun and Mercury in Sagittarius, and Whoopi Goldberg has Moon and Mercury conjunct in Scorpio, along with the Sun in that sign. **What is interesting is that the *sign* this Sun-Mercury conjunction is in then colors the humor or selects the target for satire.** Bill Cosby has Mercury and the Sun conjunct in Cancer in the fourth house, which is similar to Cancer in nature. This sign is much concerned with family and parenting, and Cosby's finest hours are in his interaction with children and in sitcoms about the family. Two comics with Sun and Mercury conjunct in Virgo are Adam Sandler and Damon Wayans. Virgo, like the sixth house, has an affinity with working people, and these two comedians make us laugh by drawing on their blue collar backgrounds. All the signs and planets are said to rule parts of the body, and I'd have to say that Mercury rules the funny bone. (If you're interested in pursuing this line of inquiry for yourself, AstroDataBank has many examples, and currently popular comedians who are not included in that collection have their birthdates published in the *Information Please Almanac*, including the on-line version⁴.)

Communication and Intelligence

Mercury rules communication and intelligence, and the two are often taken as inseparable. The person who is glib with words—perhaps with Mercury in Libra—is

³ You may recall that a conjunction is formed when two planets stand within range of one another in the zodiac, anywhere from zero to about ten degrees apart. When planets are conjunct, their energies and functions are blended together, as though they were one. This is a powerful aspect, and when the Sun is conjunct another planet, that planet is very important. The person takes on some qualities of the sign the planet is associated with—people with Mercury conjunct the Sun would be similar to Gemini.

⁴ The Information Please Almanac online biography collection is at <http://infoplease.com>. (Open your Internet connection and click on the link above to go there instantly.)

often estimated to be more intelligent than someone not so verbal who may be a deeper thinker—such as an individual with Mercury in Scorpio. Intelligence tests are largely based on verbal ability, and the foreign-born or otherwise linguistically challenged often do not score well on IQ tests written in English. While it is well-documented that IQ tests discriminate against certain kinds of people who are perfectly intelligent, group IQ tests are still permitted to determine school placement and thus to some extent the quality of our educational experience.

We humans have thought of our primate cousins—monkeys, apes, and gorillas—as far behind us in intelligence. Research, however, reveals that when taught sign language or other forms of non-spoken communication, these primates demonstrate a large vocabulary and the capacity to reason in ways similar to ours. Some of them were given IQ tests and scored at 75 or 80. The point is that we didn't teach them to think or to communicate, since they did so with each other all along. We taught them a *means* of communicating with us, and only then were we able to appreciate the extent of their intelligence.



Communication may be somewhat independent of intelligence, but without communication, we cannot make use of the intelligence and experience of others. As the experience of any single individual is necessarily less than the shared experience of the group, an inability to communicate, read, and write limits the amount we can learn. Innate intelligence can take us only so far, at least in the present century. A study of Mercury in students' birth charts gives clues to how they learn best, but I'm not so sure it always shows their intelligence. Master astrologer Lois Rodden, from her research, believed that individuals with Mercury/Saturn aspects were the brainiest, and from my experience with the charts of people with PhDs, I concur.

The inability to communicate and the feeling of being misunderstood are miserable to live with, but like most skills, communication gets better with practice. The staff of the treatment center where I taught astrology took communication skills very seriously,



because they knew how handicapped their patients were without them. One of the most intense and productive class sessions we ever had involved Mercury. When I presented the basic idea, the students got involved in a heated discussion of the problems various class members had in communicating. (In order to analyze an individual's barriers in this area, consider natal Mercury and its sign, house, and aspects, as well as the third house and any planets in it.)

Debunking Mercury Retrograde⁵

Pop astrology has created entirely too much hysteria about Mercury retrograde. I've had endless phone calls from clients and prospective clients hyperventilating over the fact that Mercury was about to turn retrograde. We are told to sign nothing, buy nothing, make no major purchases, and to expect cancellations, missed appointments, bank errors, and being stood up on social engagements. We are given reams of anecdotes and horror stories to back up this taboo. And yet, vast numbers of people buy cars, begin jobs, get married, and buy homes while Mercury is *retrograde*⁶ without experiencing any difficulty whatsoever. The world simply cannot come to a screeching halt for the three or four periods a year that Mercury is retrograde for three weeks at a stretch. Imagine the impact on the economy if it did!



Why, then, do so many followers of astrology find these periods troublesome? By well-known metaphysical principles, the power of belief can cause followers of astrology to manifest more Mercury retrograde difficulties than in the general population. By repeated negative suggestion, we can talk ourselves into making major blunders during this time, because we “know” they’re going to happen. It becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy, and when the inevitable snafus of daily living do occur, devotees of astrology say, “I told you so,” reinforcing the belief. It has also become a convenient excuse for sloppy thinking or incompetence, as well as a socially acceptable reason for not showing up for commitments. Then too, it’s more dramatic to blame your mental vagaries on the stars than to confess that you’ve had a senior moment!

It would be interesting to conduct a research project in which a roomful of people who are interested in astrology but are not astrology students are told that Mercury is

⁵ This section was based on segments published in my Astrology at Work column for Dell Horoscope Magazine over the years.

⁶ Retrograde motion is something that occurs at various times of the year with all of the planets in the solar system--excluding the sun and moon, since they are not, properly speaking, planets. In these periods, which can last several months at a time for the slower-moving outer planets, the planet appears to be moving backward from the point of view of the earth. This is strictly an illusion, based on the fact that they are on the opposite side of the sun from the earth and thus while we are moving forward, they appear to be moving in the opposite direction from us. Perhaps the simplest way of understanding why this is so is to draw a diagram of the solar system and place coins on the oval that represents the earth’s orbit and on one or more of the other planet’s orbits. As you move the coin representing the earth around its yearly orbit, you can see how the orbit of the other planet might appear to be retrograde from our perspective.

retrograde. After a description of the pitfalls ascribed to it, they are asked to write down examples of how it has been operating in their lives over the past week or two. The only thing is, the experiment would be conducted at a time when Mercury was not retrograde at all, but direct and clipping right along. I'm willing to bet that, by power of suggestion, nearly every person in that room would come up several juicy textbook examples of Mercury retrograde situations.

That's not to say that there's nothing to it...there are things I simply could not be induced to do in those periods, like buy software or communications equipment. I'm cautious to check important communications and appointments and back up computer files. I double check all astrological data for my clients and advice column and add all totals twice where money is concerned. I back up important computer files before the retrograde starts and continue backing them up regularly. It is a good idea to do backups periodically anyway, but the impending event of Mercury going retrograde prompts me to tackle the job. (Whatever works!)

Still, the Mercury REtrograde periods are a natural and even helpful recurrent cycle, totaling no more than 70 days each year—it is part of the natural rhythm of life, just like the seasons. At these times, we get the opportunity to REthink, REview, and REvis^e our thinking and our written and spoken communication. If we use it to REexamine the flow of our work and our day-to-day lives, these little mishaps can teach us something about Right Action. They can be a valuable corrective that helps us prevent more serious and ongoing errors in our work that might otherwise be compounded over time. Used correctly, these intervals can enhance our productivity and the quality of our work.

For instance, Mercury retrograde is a good time for revising and updating your procedures, mailing lists, and other systems, because during the retrograde, you tend to go over things from the past and find the glitches or dead wood. Sort out old files, catch up on correspondence, finish that backlog of paperwork, compile those tedious statistics the boss insists on every few months, get back in touch with associates and clients, and catch details that have fallen through the cracks. Reconcile your bank statements, adding all the figures twice for good measure. Deal with those stacks of mail and credit receipts. Go through that pile of magazines, newspapers, or journals that has accumulated, remove the articles you need to keep, and recycle the rest. You get the picture.

As a writer, I cherish and rely on the Mercury retrograde weeks of the year. In fact, I'm not sure I would ever complete a large writing project if it weren't for this natural rhythm of retrograde and direct motion, for I always have many more ideas and inspirations than I can use while Mercury is direct. I schedule editing and revisions for the retrograde phase, because looking back over the material, I see places where my communication is unclear. I also seem to have more patience to check my data for accuracy, to catch errors and typos, do needed research to back up my conclusions, and do the really tedious pieces like footnotes, a bibliography, and a table of contents. In RETROspect and with a cooler head, I also see the places in the text where it would have been better to keep my opinions to myself! I chose to do most of the revisions for the new edition of this book during a three-week Mercury retrograde. The work went swiftly and well (apart from a tendency to moan, "what was I thinking" when confronted with the more opinionated pronouncements in the 1970s version.)

Those of you who are more advanced in your studies may be interested to know that not all Mercury retrograde spans are alike. Some are smooth, passing with hardly a ripple if one uses sensible precautions. Others are real bears, with nothing running smoothly, an epidemic of computer crashes, and great difficulty in getting paperwork finished or ironing out agreements. **In my observation, Mercury's retrograde motion is not the deciding factor, but rather the aspects Mercury forms to other planets around the time it is stationary turning retrograde.** From around the time it turns retrograde to the time it turns direct, it moves fairly slowly, so any difficult aspects Mercury forms will be in effect continuously for about three weeks



What if your chart printout shows that you have Mercury retrograde natally? Does that mean you will always endure the kinds of mishaps and struggles that are attributed to Mercury's retrograde periods? There are many claims about what it means to have Mercury retrograde in the birth chart. Some books claim that the person's development is delayed in that area of life or that they are more introverted in that area or slower to take action or as if that planet were a bit of a dumb note. Frankly, I am not convinced that any of those theories would hold up if subjected to rigorous statistical study. With AstroDataBank, we have a wonderful tool for testing conclusions about any given astrological pattern.

One reader of my column who was concerned about this question had natal Mercury retrograde in Sagittarius conjunct the Sun, and I thought it would be fun to see who matched her Mercury and its aspects. Using AstroDatabank's search function to find individuals with Mercury Retrograde in Sagittarius, I came up with 103 examples, including quite a number of astrologers, authors, evangelists and artists. **To belie the claim that Mercury in Sagittarius would be more introverted when retrograde,** the group included such livewires as Better Middled, Tina Turner, and Sammy Davis, Jr. I next looked for people sharing that reader's conjunction of Mercury retrograde in Sagittarius to the Sun and narrowed it down to 54. They included billionaire J. Paul Getty, former House Speaker Tip O'Neal, mystery writer Rex Stout, and the wild and woolly entertainer Little Richard—hardly folks who are mentally backward or slow to take action.

One noticeable pattern is that when Mercury is retrograde in the birth chart, it does seem to reverse many of the "rules" about Mercury's retrograde periods. Many people with this placement seem to find it natural to sign contracts, buy cars, and make major decisions while Mercury is retrograde, and they do just fine. Especially if the aspects to Mercury in the natal chart are favorable ones, there seems to be little difficulty. (You will learn to analyze aspects in a later chapter, but for a given chart, you might want to request a printout of the aspects.)

The Positive Power of Thinking

Mercury rules words, ideas, and thoughts. The Bible says, "In the beginning was the word." It refers to the creation of our universe, but the same process occurs whenever we create something. The idea comes first, and then actions bring the idea into reality. I first thought of this book, this chapter, and this page, and only then did they come into existence. The *concept* comes before the *conception*.

Why do thoughts have so much power? Occult teachings say that there is a plane of existence called the *astral* where we go during dreams, in trance, or after death. On the astral plane, our thoughts take immediate visible shape, although they are not of a material you can touch. Whenever we "hold a thought" for a very long time, be it a positive or a negative one, then a *thought form* is created astrally that shapes reality on the earthly plane. So, it is true that thoughts have power, and we must be observant about what we are thinking.

If you accept this premise, the implications are profound. Though the metaphysical perspective can be overdone at times by what I call militant metaphysicians, there is truth in the teaching that ideas create our experience. If your experiences in any given area of life are primarily negative, most likely your thoughts, beliefs, and concepts about that area are fairly negative also. So long as your thoughts dwell on negatives, the experiences you draw into your life can be negative, too. If you constantly say, "No one can love me," then you may shut yourself off to love have a hard time attracting it. If you say before each job interview, "I know I won't be hired," then you won't be.

People with self-defeating patterns in love, work, or health have difficulty changing them so long as they believe they are powerless to change. When a new, positive belief enters their thoughts, they are able to start transforming their experiences. Thus, if you want to end certain negative patterns in your life, metaphysics teaches that you need to change the patterns of thought that create them. This is no simple task—many of our negative beliefs and habits of thinking were drummed into us as children by key adults, and the beliefs continue to be reinforced as adults.

As a mature metaphysician, I no longer believe that changing an unwanted life pattern is as simple as repeating a positive affirmation all day long. In this millenium, our world is too complex and too economically and ecologically interdependent for one individual to change some of the more painful realities of our collective existence. However, if you sense that neutralizing habitually negative thoughts and replacing them with positive ones would improve the quality of your own life, you might find it helpful to look into some of the teachers who have written about these ideas. The usefulness of books by authors like Marianne Williamson, Jane Roberts, and Depak Chopra is that they give us tools for working on negative thought patterns—look for them on the internet if you can't find them locally.



VENUS -- LEARNING TO LOVE

During the time I was writing this chapter, I was walking along the street and suddenly found a heart at my feet—a pretty, heart-shaped pendant with old-fashioned flowers. Love is



like that. It doesn't do any good to work at finding it, to plot and scheme to get it, or to try all the tricks in the book to win it. You just go about the business of developing yourself, and one day it's there. It doesn't even have that much to do with deserving it—some rotten and reprehensible philanderers have dozens of people in love with them. Venus is as capricious and elusive as any planet in the solar system. Let's try to get an understanding of its role in our lives.

Venus and Jupiter are traditionally labeled **benefics** by astrologers, meaning that they are supposedly benign forces that bring good fortune our way, and yet both have their ill effects when misused.

The negative Venusian type can be lazy, self-indulgent, vain, and greedy. Certainly, Venusians can be charming and physically attractive, but if they rely solely on those attributes to get through life, they fail to develop their potential or character. Many beautiful women and men have called their looks a curse—not that they get much sympathy from the rest of us, but beauty apparently has its drawbacks.

Rod Chase pointed out that Venus can be a trap that is a parody of true relating. He cited the Venus flytrap plant and **venereal** disease (a word that has Venus as its root) as indications that Venus has its perils. **When we use beauty, charm, or wealth to trap another person into loving us, that love will probably last only as long as the beauty or wealth it was based on.** Yet for a great many men and women, these superficial Venusian traits are the basis for accepting or rejecting potential partners.



The physical characteristics of each planet in our solar system seem to parallel the planet's role in our lives. The Sun represents our center, while Venus is merely one of the planets that orbits around the Sun. This suggests that we can't let the love of another person become the center of our existence without becoming off-centered ourselves. If we put another human being at the center and then lose them, we are left with a vacuum or void. The balance between self and other is difficult to find.

The conflicts represented by Venus can be just as hard to deal with as those represented by those awesome outer planets, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune, or Pluto. By far the greatest number of letters to my advice column in Dell Horoscope Magazine¹ have to do with love—lovers not getting along, wannabe lovers, lovers who have left (up to 25 years ago in some cases) and lack of love. Uniformly, these people are miserable. **To love**

¹ Since 1994, I have been an advice columnist for Dell Horoscope Magazine, writing their Dear Abbey type column called Astrology at Work. Catch it on the newsstands if you are interested, and feel free to submit letters to me there. Dell's website is: <http://www.dellhoroscope.com>.

and be loving in a balanced, healthy way without sacrificing our own individuality seems to be one of life's most difficult tasks.

The Symbols for Venus and Libra



The glyph for Venus should be familiar because both feminists and the general public have chosen it to represent women. Actually, it's not such a liberated symbol—Venus represents some of the qualities the Women's Movement of the 1970s disowned, such as preoccupation with beauty, seductiveness, and bending over backwards to keep the peace. In mythology, Venus was the goddess of love, yet today's women wish to be known as *people* rather than only as love goddesses.

What does it say about our culture that Venus is so readily accepted as female? Venus represents attractiveness, grace, sensuality, affection, cooperation, sympathy and art. All these characteristics of Venus, then, are considered the proper role for women. Implicit in this view is that women shouldn't actively go after what they want but should make themselves beautiful to seduce their men into getting it for them.

All men have the planet Venus in their charts as well, but our cultural programming suppresses these characteristics in men and labels them effeminate. Yet men have as much need as women do to live Venus out directly, rather than vicariously through the women in their lives. It is not astrology *per se* but our culture's bias that labels Venus female.

Let's see what else the glyph for Venus may tell us about the planet. Many astrologers have noted that Venus is shaped like a flower—a beautiful, delicate perfumed object that we give as a token of love. Bulbs that are forced fail to flower again, and so does love that we try to force. There is a painting by Picasso called *La Femme Fleur* (Woman-Flower), in which a woman with a head like a flower is shaped like the symbol for Venus.



The glyph reminds us also of a looking glass, and Venusian people can be preoccupied with their appearance and quite vain. Those with Venus conjunct the Sun or Ascendant and many with Libra rising are often prone to narcissism. On the other hand, Venus without the crossbar looks like a lollipop, and the crossbar might be a warning that you don't have to be a *sucker* in a relationship—nor should you suck the other person dry.



One of the symbols for the Venus-ruled sign Libra is the old-fashioned scale in which both sides must be made to balance. Whether Libra is strong in your chart or not, an analysis of your Venus will tell you how you strive for balance. My Venus is conjunct Uranus, the indicator of astrology, and I strive constantly for a balanced view of

various factors in the horoscope. I also use astrology to keep my emotions and impulses in balance. The lack of planets in Libra or having difficult aspects to Venus can sometimes indicate a problem in keeping your balance on a physical level. I fall down rather a lot, and, with Venus conjunct Uranus, it is because my ankles suddenly give way.

On the mental and spiritual levels as well, a lack of balance can be related to Venus/Libra deficits. On the other hand (a Libran expression!), balance is the Venus/Libra lesson for *all* of us to master. I've known numbers of Librans who were striving so desperately for balance that they became unbalanced. Being overly focused on one concern, whether mental, emotional, or physical, leads to an unhealthy imbalance. Still some degree of overbalancing (specialization) may necessary for success.

I once discovered something interesting about the glyph for Libra. I was trying to explain the laws of chance to a friend, and drew a picture of the "normal," or bell curve, which most statistical distributions fall into. (That is, the greatest number of scores fall near the center of any given scale, while both the very highest scores and the very lowest scores fall at low points on the graph.) A sample graph with this typical curve is shown here:



When you extract that curve from the graph, you get something that greatly resembles the glyph for Libra. The designers (human or otherwise) of these ancient astrological symbols incorporated a great deal of spiritual wisdom into them, if we will only free our intuition to perceive their meanings.

Let's look at the connections between this observation and the sign of Libra. Blind justice and impartial fair play have been connected with both Libra and the game of chance called life. Keeping a balance and following the *golden mean* are Libra desires. One of the first areas in which the normal curve was found, and where it is most often cited, was in intelligence test scores—and the sign Libra is much concerned with intelligence and intellectual pursuits.

Venus in Exaltation, Detriment and Fall

I don't pay much attention to the traditional astrological categories of *exaltation*, *detriment*, and *fall* for the planets², because these placements often seem to operate in ways contrary to those teachings. However, pondering these categories seems to clarify the nature of Venus and its proper role in our lives. Venus is in exaltation in Pisces, in fall in Virgo, and in detriment in Scorpio and Aries.



² These terms represent a traditional method of evaluating the strength of planets in various zodiac signs. *Exaltation* is the sign where a planet is supposedly at its best, and *detriment* is a sign where the planet is ill at ease. A planet is in detriment in the sign opposite the one it rules—e.g. Venus rules Libra and supposedly rules Taurus, and so Venus is in detriment in both Aries and Scorpio. A planet is in its *fall* in the sign where it is supposedly at its weakest or worst—the sign opposite the one where it is exalted.



While thinking about love relationships, which Venus rules, I got a flash of a couple slow dancing and could immediately see why Venus is exalted in Pisces, the sign of the dance. An intimate relationship such as marriage should be like a dance. One partner leads, but only nominally rather than in the sense of controlling. Each partner is keenly sensitive to the moves of the other and takes reciprocal action. There is flow, ease, rhythm, and grace to the relatedness. Each knows when to go backwards or yield, in what Rod Chase calls the strategic retreat of Pisces.

Later, I realized that this image is based on a rather old-fashioned idea. Both intimacy and dance have changed since the days of ballroom dancing. In modern dancing, partners do not lean on each other, and neither leads. Both improvise and "do their own thing" and may or may not reflect their partner's motions, depending on how it suits them.

There is freedom, equality, spontaneity, individuality, and creative self-expression in this type of dance—and in the kind of partnerships our society is now fostering. However, Venus (and Libra, which it rules) is concerned with balance. If two dancing partners or two people in a relationship become too involved in their own concerns, they can lose contact and head in totally different directions (as happens in so many relationships these days). So, the key again is to find the right balance between contact and self-expression.

Venus is in *fall* in Virgo, and many unappealing qualities have been attributed to Venus in that sign. The sixth house, which Virgo is related to, provides an image to understand why. The sixth house rules servants, among other things, and if you are a servant to your loved one or if your loved one is a servant to you, there is no equality in the relationship and it suffers. Virgo has also been associated with virginal chastity and even of prudishness, though in practice, Virgos can be very sensual once their standards are met.



Venus is in *detriment* in both Scorpio and Aries, again because the crucial factor of equality can easily be missing from such love relationships. An idea about the nature of Venus in Scorpio can be discovered in the traditional marriage ceremony. Marriage is supposedly related to Libra or the seventh house, but traditional marriage vows are extremely colored by Scorpio or the eighth house. The promise—which many modern couples omit from the marriage ceremony— "*to have and to hold, in sickness and health, for richer or poorer, until death do us part,*" is much like the eighth house.

In this view, the partner is regarded as property to be owned—and the laws of our society are still not completely free of the ancient concept that the wife cannot own and control her own property or her own life. If the loved one is owned and possessed, there is no equality, and Venus is in detriment. In our individualistic Aquarian age, many people are rejecting the old marriage vows and their implications and instead making up their own.



As for Venus in Aries, there is also no equality when relatedness is something *done to* or *done for* the other person, in the sense of dominating or intruding on the right of free choice or freedom to grow. Venus would indeed be in detriment in action-oriented Aries if it is a *doing to* kind of relatedness. This approach can be **detrimental** if the individual with this placement becomes so wrapped up in *doing* things that there is seldom a pause to be receptive to other people.



However, each planet in each sign has its positive and its negative expressions. For example, many humanitarians have Venus in Virgo—the love of service—and many healers have Venus in Scorpio—the healing power of love. Rather than criticizing or praising any planet in any particular sign, put each planet and each aspect in your chart to work in its most positive form. Astrology is not meant to be used to judge and condemn, but to uplift and enlighten. That is why Uranus, the planet of astrology, is exalted in Scorpio, the sign of regeneration.

Venus and the Outer Planets — Challenges in Personal Love

While tough aspects between Venus and the inner planets can show difficulties in relating, they are nothing compared to the difficulties that can arise when Venus is in hard aspect to the outer planets—Saturn, Uranus, Neptune, and Pluto. (By difficult aspects, I mean conjunctions, semisquares, squares, quincunxes, and oppositions.) I find the conjunctions to Venus the most difficult, but all such aspects can indicate trouble in forming relationships.

Since the outer planets present such challenges in relating, let's see how Venus is affected by each of them in turn and look at some celebrity examples. In addition, if Venus is in the sign ruled by the outer planet, it has some of the same qualities as the aspect. For instance, Saturn is similar to Capricorn, so Venus in Capricorn presents some of the same constraints as Venus in aspect to Saturn. However, planets in signs are never so strongly affected by the patterns I will describe as are planets in the related aspects, so do not conclude the effect would be identical.

Venus and Saturn: (Similar to Venus in Capricorn) Combinations of Venus and Saturn can make it hard for the person to form relationships and to feel love-worthy. Generally one or both parents were Saturnian in the negative sense--rather cold, rigid, somber, authoritarian and unable to show affection. Often, they saw the child mostly as an extra responsibility, an added burden, or even as coming in the way of their own goals and ambitions. The parents could not love the playful, childish qualities of their offspring, so the child learned to grow up fast in order not to experience the parents' displeasure. The only way to please the parents was to be as Saturnian as *they* were, so the child learned that the only way to be "loved" was to be serious, business-like, responsible, and successful...a model child.

The Venus-Saturn aspect can be painful because it often entails what psychologists call a *double bind* (a "damned if you do and damned if you don't" set-up). The child with this aspect has to be self-reliant in order to please the parent. However, the more self-reliant the child is, the more the parent withdraws, grateful that the child no longer needs much of their time and attention. (Emotional needs are not recognized as valid reasons to detract the parents from their other duties.) Therefore, being responsible and reliable also brings

about loss of closeness, and so the child is in a bind—whatever he does, he loses.

Saturn relates to time and maturity. Saturn's current (transiting) sign and the angles it forms to planets in the birth chart trigger the typical stages of maturation in our lives. With an orbit around the Sun that lasts 29.46 years, transiting Saturn makes especially strong aspects to its original place in our chart every seven years—at seven, when we're really getting involved with school, at 14, when we're teenagers, and at 21, when we're legally adults.

Naturally, for the Venus-Saturn person, each time transiting Saturn aspects its natal place, it forms an aspect to natal Venus as well; so each of these periods of growth, accomplishment, maturing, and taking on of responsibility brings progressively less parental support. Experiences like this make it hard for these individuals to trust others to fulfill their needs. They learned from their parents that they can't be loved if they aren't Saturnian, and that they can't be loved if they *are* Saturnian either, so their logical conclusion would be that they can't be loved at all. They can feel deprived of love; as protection against that painful feeling, they may build walls against the world. The wall winds up reinforcing their feeling of being unlovable, because sooner or later other people stop trying to get through it.



The positive side of a Venus-Saturn aspect is that you don't get older—you get better. A late bloomer, you may have been a plain, awkward teenager but suddenly become a beauty in your thirties or forties. Nor do you age as harshly as other folks—you may look years younger than your peers. Your popularity improves with age, too—seriousness is problematic for an adolescent but is expected of the middle-aged and older. You build a support group of significant others over time, and these connections tend to be long-lasting. Through your serious approach to life, you can also achieve a great deal in the way of accomplishments that earn you respect. As you accomplish some of your important goals, you would tend to relax and feel worthy of pleasure—you've paid your dues.

Venus-Saturn People: A search of AstroDataBank reveals that those with the conjunction include Donald Trump, Denzel Washington, Ashley Judd, Vanessa Williams, and John F. Kennedy, Jr.

Venus and Uranus: (Similar to Venus in Aquarius) People with this aspect have to learn to "hang loose" in relationships or suffer many setbacks. Plain old laundry-folding, rent-paying love doesn't interest them—they want excitement, glitter, and variety. Furthermore, there's often an attraction to slightly dangerous, potentially volatile types, just for the sheer adrenaline rush. They generally relate to people vastly different from themselves—sometimes people from vastly different backgrounds, and sometimes the funky, rebellious, nonconformist who'll jump on a motorcycle and roar off into the sunset.

This is exciting as long as you don't get possessive and don't want roots and commitment—but insist on them with these Uranian types, and you'll suddenly find them gone. Sudden changes and disruptions in the love life mark this aspect—no Golden Anniversary celebrations likely. And don't expect the person to be there for you consistently...your Uranian partner is likely to be too detached to relate to your feelings. So what's in it for you? You're



the one doing the choosing, and you chose this paragon, following the itch of that Venus-Uranus aspect. For more security, you may have to learn to care for people who aren't quite as stimulating, but who are more likely to be there when you need them.



What psychological factors and what childhood experiences lead to a pattern like this? Uranus might signify a broken home or a parent who came and went unpredictably, and perhaps a home where upheaval was present. Often, upheaval became an expected part of relationships in adulthood.

What positives are there in this aspect? It results in a cosmopolitan experience and the ability to get along with many different kinds of people. Often you come in contact with interesting and stimulating people from a variety of cultures and backgrounds who broaden your mind—I call this the Universal Brotherhood aspect. You may also be able to relate to young people and help them through the turmoil of growing up. Furthermore, you may be open and receptive to new acquaintances who are forever drawn into your orbit, so you are always learning from them.

Venus-Uranus People: A search of AstroDataBank reveals that those with the conjunction include Tom Cruise, Michael Jackson, skater Scott Hamilton, fitness advocate Richard Simmons, Elizabeth Taylor, and Candice Bergen.

Venus and Neptune: (Similar to Venus in Pisces.) Frequently a savior/martyr complex exists in the love relationships of people born under this aspect. You may very well choose people you think you can reform—Neptune/twelfth house types of people such as ex-cons, alcoholics, invalids, or severely wounded people. A pattern of choices like these can leave you hurt when your goals of reform or cure are unrealistic. After you're hurt a few times by alcoholics, you may avoid them, but proceed to some other Neptunian type. Oddly enough, the more different your potential partners appear on the outside, the more they are alike in their crucial innermost qualities.



With this aspect your psychic sensitivity is very keen, even if you're using it for self-destructive choices. Before you can stop "magically" picking out partner after partner that fits such a pattern, you must become aware of your part in the situation and of why you may unconsciously pick people who hurt you. You are not a victim, although with this aspect you might secretly enjoy believing you are—if so, you're one of those people who enjoy the role of martyr. Despite blatant clues that are red flags to those around you, neurotic need blinds you to the true nature of these people. It might be that dysfunctional partners unconsciously make you feel superior while at the same time like a very special, terribly compassionate super-being who will work the miracle of cure.

Often, too, the problem is related to the model of codependent relationships you saw at home. As a social worker, I found that almost every woman whose husband was an alcoholic had a father or other significant person in her childhood who drank heavily. The masochistic satisfaction her mother derived from being the rescuer and



Rock of Gibraltar for the family transmitted itself to the daughter and shaped her vision of what marriage was like. She wound up selecting either a man who drank too much but "gave it up for me"—gave it up, that is, until the first bloom of love wore off. Or else she chose a man of whom she says, "I didn't know he drank," even though she should have been extremely familiar with the signs and symptoms because of her own father. Wives of drug addicts show similar dynamics.

The "way out" for a Venus-Neptune person is to relate compassionately to such troubled people without feeling the necessity to rescue them and play the martyr. A better choice of mate might be someone who personifies the positive traits of Neptune—spirituality, creativity, and dedication to service.

Venus-Neptune People: A search of AstroDataBank reveals that those with the conjunction include Bill Clinton, Richard Gere, Meg Ryan, Jodi Foster, Christopher Reeve, and Matt Damon.

Venus and Pluto: (Similar to Venus in Scorpio) With this combination, you may alternate between extremes—being a loner or getting into *symbiotic* (joined at the hip) relationships so smothering and possessive that it's hard to remain an individual. Jealousy, suspicion, and lack of trust are usually present, along with brooding and bitterness over former lovers you drove away with the smothering routine. "Til death do us part" is your motto in any relationship, so you find it hard to forget—or forgive—the ones that got away. Yet, your intensity and neediness can overwhelm people and make them feel so smothered that they leave.

Control may also be an important issue in your relationships—if it is and if you don't have it, you may manipulate and maneuver until you get it. If the other person is in control, you may exercise the final word in control by leaving. Obviously, this manner of relating to other people leaves them (and you) without much freedom or individuality, and 's not likely to make either of you happy. Letting up on your control and possessiveness is hard work, but persisting in these patterns warps your relationships. (Read the suggestions in the chapter on Pluto).

Venus-Pluto People: A search of AstroDataBank reveals that those with the conjunction include Antonio Banderas, Sean Penn, Duchess Sarah Ferguson, Beyonce Knowles, Dr. Phil McGraw, Simon Cowell, and Raquel Welch.

We have only been able to skim the surface of outer planet aspects to Venus here—how the relationship patterns connected with them arise and how to use them in more constructive ways are very complex questions. A chapter is devoted to each of the outer planets in later sections of this book, and you can deepen your understanding of their



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aspects to Venus by reading those chapters. In addition, for more in-depth explorations of Venus aspects to Uranus, Neptune, or Pluto, you may wish to read my ebook, *The Outer Planets and Inner Life, Volume Two: Exceptional Soul Seeks Same*. It devotes an entire chapter of each of these aspects, along with celebrity examples. Order it at: <http://www.moonmavenpublications.com>.

Outer Planet Transits to the Sign Libra—

Understanding the Evolution of Modern Relationship Patterns

Relationships have changed massively since the mid-70s edition of this book. One of the catalysts for change has been transits of the outer planets through Venus-ruled Libra. Libra is the sign of marriage and divorce, partnerships of all sorts; equality in relationships, justice; beauty and fashion, diplomacy; fair play, and peace. Neptune transited Libra from 1942-55; Uranus transited it from 1968-75, and Pluto was there from 1971-84. Saturn's stays in Libra from 1950-53 and 1980-83 overlapped these outer planet transits and added complexity to the situation. (The study of outer planet transits and how areas of life connected with various signs evolve during these transits is a fascinating one, though beyond the scope of this book.)

During each of these eras, social change initiated changes in the relationships between the sexes and affected partnerships of all sorts. The current fascination with cosmetic surgery, for instance, began with Pluto in Libra and is part of the way young people born with Pluto in Libra try to make themselves appealing in order to find a partner.

In the aftermath of these outer planet transits to Libra, divorce statistics have reached 50% in some parts of the United States. People in serious relationships have had to find a new basis for connecting with one another—a search that is far from over. Gaining an understanding of the areas of your chart that signify your own personal relationship patterns and preferences can be a head start. They include the sign, house and aspects of your natal Venus, as well as the condition of the relationship houses of your chart—the seventh, eighth, and fifth, in particular. (You'll learn about the houses and aspects in more detail in later chapters.)



As we have seen, Venus represents our ability to love and to relate to others. Sharing, cooperation, equality, and harmony all go into a good relationship. Love has many pitfalls, and Venus isn't the easy, beneficent force traditional astrology made it out to be. It must be approached in as spiritual a manner as any of the outer planets. In today's world, personal love is often a source of disappointment, but love that is based on spirituality is a step in the right direction.

MARS AND HEALTHY SELF-ASSERTIVENESS¹

Traditional astrologers called Mars a *malefic* or evil planet, but I disagree with them on two counts. First, the division of planets into *malefics* and *benefics* is a limited concept—any planet rightly used has constructive functions in our lives, and any planet improperly used can be destructive, even supposedly benefic Venus and Jupiter.

Secondly, Mars by itself is neither positive nor negative. Its key meaning is "directed energy," and whether the result is constructive or destructive depends on the ways we direct our energy. The outcome depends largely on the character of the individual, which is the sum of the entire chart and all our life history, not just Mars and its aspects.

Among other things, Mars in our horoscopes represents anger, competition, and sexuality, and perhaps this is another reason it was designated a malefic. Our culture has yet to become entirely comfortable with these basic urges and emotions. In this chapter, we will explore positive uses of Mars, see how less constructive expressions of it arise, and consider whether the more difficult manifestations, such as anger, are not also normal and even potentially healthy facets of human nature. In trying to understand Mars, we will note what psychological theories have to say about anger, aggression and self-assertiveness.



The Symbol for Mars

There are very deep meanings coded into astrological glyphs, and they speak more to our subconscious than to our conscious minds if we open up and let them. While teaching astrology at the treatment center for alcoholics, I had them draw the symbol very large several times without telling them anything about Mars. Their observations were quite profound. One said it was perpetual motion outwardly directed; others said it was energetic, forceful, and aggressive. You may want to try this experiment yourself.



¹ Part of this material was originally published as "Mars and Healthy Aggression," *Aquarian Astrology*, Summer 1973 issue, p. 84. Reprinted by permission of CBS Publications, Consumer Publishing Division of CBS, Inc.

Our culture has accepted Mars as the symbol for males. Certainly, if you elongate the arrow slightly, it could represent erect male genitalia. A male with an erection is driven by



desire, and Mars represents the desires that drive us on. However, Mars is neither masculine nor feminine, but part of the nature of each individual, for it is *human* to get angry, to compete, to have strong sexual needs and to show other characteristics of Mars. Despite decades of change in the roles of men and women, however, a woman with a strong Mars is still likely to be considered too aggressive and masculine, just as men with a strong Venus may still be considered too feminine.

Mars and Energy

We said earlier that the keywords for Mars are "directed energy." Analyzing Mars in your chart—the sign, house, and aspects—can provide many insights into your energy patterns and how to get the most out of them. You can learn to work with your peaks and valleys of energy rather than against them, thereby relieving stress and increasing your effectiveness. Start, again, with what you know about the Sun sign involved, and then think about how that sign would apply to Mars' concerns like energy. Is your energy erratic and directed toward unusual pursuits, like Mars in Aquarius tends to be, or slow, steady, and even plodding like Mars in Taurus, the sign of the bull? People with Mars in Taurus shouldn't expect to work in spurts or leave things until the last minute. They need warm-up time and can't be pushed, so they should start gearing up for action well in advance.

Mars in Gemini individuals might need to have more than one task going in order to stave off boredom, but should recognize that too many activities at once or too much talking can distract them from getting anything done. Or, they can arrange their schedule so that boring tasks like ironing or working out on a treadmill can be done while talking on the phone. They are perfectly capable of multi-tasking. By analyzing and understanding your Mars and its inherent qualities, you can make more effective use of your time and energy.

Watching [transits to your chart](#) by Mars' current sign or else transits to natal Mars helps you channel bursts of energy and make the best use of them². When the Moon is transiting through your Mars sign or forming aspects to your natal Mars are also windows for accomplishing a great deal³. I wrote this chapter while my Mercury in Gemini was transited by Mars in Virgo. Virgo, with its keen eye for detail is the sign of some of the best editors I have known. Accordingly, I chose to put that energy to work in writing about Mars. I could have wasted this time by expressing some of Mars in Virgo's less positive qualities--getting hung up in housework or fussing and complaining about the imperfections around me. I was sorely tempted by each of those options, but said no. (Following transits to your chart does tend to open up better options!)

² You will learn about transits in a later chapter. Basically, they refer to the current positions of the planets in the solar system and how they interact with the planets in your natal chart. You would discover your transits by consulting a book called an ephemeris or by ordering a computerized printout.

³ You can get printouts of transits from the same computer services mentioned earlier, but once you have memorized the glyphs, you can also learn to follow an astrological calendar from a New Age bookstore.

Constructive Functions of Mars

Some of the constructive functions that Mars represents are action, initiative, leadership, the need to build and accomplish, and the effort toward self-mastery. These are all upward and outward thrusts of energy, like the arrow on the Mars symbol. A person with a strong, positive Mars will be energetic, productive, independent, forceful, and energetic. When Mars is functioning in helpful ways like this, we should consider it a benefic rather than a malefic. How could we accomplish anything without it?

People with Mars or Aries strong in their chart are often very active and energetic—they could even be called vibrant. This abundance of energy can lead to accomplishing a great deal if the energy is focused and disciplined toward specific aims. Many Mars-dominant people, however, are in love with action for its own sake. They do things just to be doing something, without thinking it through. As a result, they don't always accomplish much that is worthwhile and their efforts are often wasted. Sometimes needless activity detracts from working on goals that are more meaningful. Unless their efforts are centered, they may be busy all the time and yet accomplish little. Mars is exalted in the sign Capricorn, and this teaches us that we get the most out of our energy and activity levels when we are disciplined and plan ahead.

Leadership is another trait attributed to Aries and other people with a strong Mars⁴. Aries people want to be Number One in all things, and their pioneering spirit makes them take the lead. I owe to Rod Chase the insight that in order to be a good leader, paradoxically, you need to be a good follower. He notes that orchestra leaders follow the musical score, actors follow the script, military leaders follow the orders of those above them, and spiritual leaders are obedient to God. Actually, many famous generals (Dwight D. Eisenhower, for instance) have been Librans rather than Aries. Rather than charging rashly into battle, sometimes it is better to wait or even beat a strategic retreat. All things are good in balance—the positive side of leadership is courage, vitality and keenness.

Many people place negative judgements on competitiveness, another of Mars' urges. And yet, we ignore how much of human progress is rooted in this hard-wired facet of the human psyche. Without healthy economic competition, many of the advances and comforts we take so much for granted would never have been invented or become commonplace.

I see the sheer beauty of Mars so often while watching the Olympics or other athletic championships. Athletes challenge themselves in part because of a wish for self-mastery, but also because of the stimulus toward excellence supplied by rivalry with other gifted athletes. These contests push the windows of human physical potential further and further all the time, showing us all how much more is possible than we once dreamed. For instance, in figure skating, where it was once considered amazing to achieve a double jump, a quadruple jump is now practically a requirement for winning. Certainly it is possible to overdo competition, like the parents who make their children's



⁴ Mars might be said to be strong in your chart if you have Sun, Moon, Ascendant, or several planets in the sign Aries or if you have many aspects to your Mars.

success in the Little League or soccer a requisite for love and approval. However, children whose natural competitive urges are entirely squelched may wind up with little motivation for achievement and self-mastery in adult life.

If you feel that someone has difficulties in some of the Mars-related areas discussed above, a detailed analysis of Mars in that person's chart could help uncover the reasons. Maybe the person hasn't yet begun to express the positive side of Mars. Redirecting energy into more positive channels can heal many of the problems people experience with expressing their Mars. Look for the glyph for Mars in the chart, and note its house and sign. Check the printout for Mars' aspects.



As an example, let's consider Mars in Pisces or a Mars-Neptune aspect. Individuals using it negatively might be spending much of their energy in the pursuit of drugs or alcohol, to the detriment of the rest of their development. The more positive expressions might include art, music, or dance, helping disturbed or ill people, or in following the spiritual path. Mars in Pisces or Mars-Neptune people can be lethargic and aimless, but once they aim for positive expressions of Neptune like the ones above, they can have a tremendous creative or spiritual vitality, and their lives take on direction and meaning that were previously lacking. People who have shown the range of expressions that Mars-Neptune aspects are capable of are Tiger Woods, Eddie Murphy, Barbra Streisand, John Denver, and Carol Burnett

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A specific example of the range of possibilities in a single chart placement might be Mars in Scorpio in the third house (the house of communication), a combination I've heard described as "a black belt in tongue karate." Three singers whose music shows the intense verbal style of Mars in Scorpio in the third are k.d. lang, rocker Marilyn Manson, and country legend Waylon Jennings⁵. Negative uses might be sarcasm, feuding with relatives, or digging up gossip about the neighbors—all bringing misery to the person who has this placement or to those in their path. A more positive channel for this energy might be studying, writing, teaching, or doing research on topics like psychology, healing, or the occult. It would also be good for medical research or writing mystery novels. If the person's energies were channeled into fascinating activities like these, little time or enthusiasm would be left for disputes.

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Another example would be Mars in Aquarius in the sixth house, the house of work. Before this chart placement is properly directed, the person might have an erratic work history, be unable to conform to rules, and have explosive arguments with the boss that periodically lead to being fired. How can this be used constructively? Correct vocational choice is essential. It can't be a traditional, routine setting, but rather one that offers freedom, flexibility, variety, and mental stimulation. The person needs to work independently, perhaps freelancing, rather than being heavily supervised. A modern, technical field such as computer science might be favored. The person might even be an astrologer! If these conditions are met, this could be an outstanding worker—Mars in the sixth can pour energy and initiative into the workplace, and Aquarius suggests creativity and innovation.

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⁵ As listed in AstroDataBank.

When you see Mars in a difficult placement or aspect in a chart, don't let negative interpretations in books discourage you. Mars has positive expressions for each sign, house, and aspect, and you can uncover them if you analyze it. Work toward the positive expressions, and you'll be much less troubled by the negative ones. Old habits die hard, and we all take a step backward now and then. At least the thrust of your life will be upward, and you'll be drawing positive experiences your way instead of negative.

Mars and Aggression

When the outward thrust of Mars' arrow is carried to an extreme, the individual can be headstrong, rash, careless, and pugnacious. Mars' directness and sharpness can be carried to the point of sarcasm and even cruelty. These are more aggressive and hostile expressions of what is essentially a neutral energy. Psychologists have studied aggression intensively, and their findings may give us insight into Mars and how its energies are diverted into negative forms. One well-known theory is that aggression is a learned behavior and that the key factor in producing aggression is frustration, especially of basic needs or drives.

We can observe this in children who are trying unsuccessfully to get their mother's attention. The child may first speak to her, then touch her, then tug at her with increasing intensity, and finally, when none of these efforts succeeds, bite or kick her out of frustration and rage. The initial intent was not hostile, but severe frustration increased the level of hostility. The same principle can be observed in the aggressive behavior of adults, whether overt or extremely subtle in expression. Consider, for example, the yelling and honking of a frustrated driver caught in a traffic jam. Aggressive patterns learned in childhood can carry over into adult life and be acted on long after the original frustrations are forgotten.



How does the theory that frustration leads to aggression relate to the planet Mars? Mars is the basic outward thrust of the personality—the energy and desire that is directed toward some goal. When we are blocked or frustrated in reaching that goal, as we often are in the real world, the angry, aggressive side of Mars emerges. Mars *per se* is not anger, but anger is a secondary expression of Mars's energy when it is not allowed to move toward its goal. Anger and aggression are normal, inevitable emotions. They are facts of life resulting from the reality that we cannot always have what we want—not that it would necessarily be desirable if we could.

If we know which sign of the zodiac Mars occupies in an individual's chart, we can get some idea of how the person has learned to deal with anger. It may be expressed easily and openly, as for instance with a **well-aspected** Mars in Aries⁶; diffusely and self-destructively, as with a poorly aspected Mars in Pisces; or suppressed at all costs while it ferments underground, as with a Mars in Scorpio in the twelfth house. These are all placements that we can

⁶ A well-aspected Mars is one in a sign that is hospitable to its nature, such as the fire signs Aries, Leo, and Sagittarius, or that forms supportive aspects like trines or sextiles to planets that enhance its functioning, like Jupiter or Mercury. More difficult aspects for Mars would be to Saturn, Uranus, Neptune, or Pluto.

learn to use positively, but work may be needed to divert the energy from negative uses.

Habitually suppressing most of our anger is destructive to our mental and physical health. If we hide anger from ourselves by various defense mechanisms, we may express it in indirect ways. Unconscious anger doesn't go away and, suppressed over long periods of time, can erupt in destructive ways—including depression, psychosomatic illnesses and addictions. If someone is carrying around a load of anger all the time, an upheaval is likely to occur during Mars transits. The added force of Mars, not necessarily destructive in itself, can be the spark that sets off the suppressed rage. The fury that follows is attributed to Mars, when it actually is due to unhealthy accumulation of anger.

Individuals who acknowledge, express, and regulate anger in healthy ways never build up to such an explosion, so a transit from Mars is not destructive. They are also freer to show more of the positive characteristics of Mars described earlier. Conversely, suppressing Mars in one area freezes, poisons, or clamps down on other Mars functions. When we are carrying around a load of anger about our jobs, for instance, we are more tired and drained when we get home than if we are happy at work. People who learn to deal with suppressed anger become more energetic, more productive, and more fully sexually expressed. Depression or psychosomatic symptoms disappear, and they live fuller lives.



Naturally, it is much easier to inform people they must learn to deal with their anger than it is for them to do it. In some cases, psychotherapy, anger management groups, or other kinds of outside intervention may be needed. I'm not giving you carte blanche to vent hostility on everything in sight, which can be just as destructive as always suppressing anger. The driver with road rage, for example, is generally venting pent-up anger about more important life issues such as marital problems or a storehouse of long-repressed rage.

Astrology can help identify problems with anger and uncover the causes. Suppose a person has Mars conjunct Neptune, where Neptune rules the tenth house⁷, the house that describes our authority figures. This could be someone who had an irrational and inconsistent authority figure growing up and therefore fears that expressing anger will result in going crazy. Another example might be someone with Mars conjunct Pluto in Leo in the first house, with Pluto ruling the fourth house (family roots, especially the mother). In this case, a parent, possibly the mother, may have actively suppressed the child's aggressive and angry behavior, so that the person unconsciously fears there will be heavy retribution for any outward show of anger. However, it is not *anger* itself but rather the suppression and accumulation of anger that leads to consequences such as these.



Mars and Irritability

Irritability is a rather distorted form of anger. The irritable person finds constant sources of annoyance in the daily environment, and there are some physical constitutions that are more inherently irritable than others—you can even sometimes see these

⁷ Recall that the ruler of a house is the planet that rules the sign on the cusp (beginning edge) of that house. If Neptune ruled the tenth house, this would mean that the sign Pisces, which Neptune rules, would be on the tenth house cusp, also known as the Midheaven. The ruler of the first house (a.k.a. the Ascendant) is considered particularly important—in traditional astrology, it was called the Chart Ruler.

differences in infants. Deciphering the sign, house placement, and aspects of Mars in the chart may help unravel the wellspring of irritability so that it can be worked on more directly. There are some signs where Mars is less irritable than others—people with Mars in Taurus or Leo, for instance, aren't very irritable unless Mars forms difficult aspects, such as to Uranus or Saturn. Mars in Virgo can find continual sources of frustration in the imperfections that inevitably exist in the workplace. People with Mars in Pisces can experience a generalized irritability, and they can get relief through exercise involving flowing movements dancing, swimming, or doing Tai Chi. Exercise, in general, can help move irritability through the system and out of it.

Albert Ellis, a psychotherapist who developed his own style of treatment called Rational Emotive Therapy, had one way of finding the underlying cause for irritability. He asked us to monitor the irrational "sentences" we carry around in our unconscious that cause us to behave neurotically. People with Mars in Cancer, for instance, might go around fuming because they believe, "I've got to take care of everybody and nobody will take care of me!" This sentence is irrational on two counts. First of all, who told you that you have to be super-mother and take care of everyone around you? There's no law that says that you do, and in an amazing number of cases, everyone would survive quite well without your help. Second, if nobody ever takes care of you, you are making poor relationship choices, unconsciously selecting people who only take and can't give.

The Mars in Virgo person's sentence may go like this, "Things are all wrong here, and I've always got to be the one to set them right!" This is a fallacious belief for two reasons. First, who says things are all wrong? You? Who made you the judge of what is right for other people? What feels wrong or uncomfortable for you may be the most effective way for someone else to operate, or may even be the source of his or her particular genius. (Do you know that the floor of Abraham Lincoln's law office was so dirty that the apple seeds he dropped there would sprout? So did the ideas he espoused for humanity!) Second, what says you have to be the one to set things right? If it is truly wrong and dysfunctional, rather than just not perfect by your exacting standards, then it will feel wrong to others too and they can be motivated to work with you. The only real avenue to change is in not forcing your way of doing things onto others. Isn't it an ego trip to feel that you are the one and only person who can straighten things out?

Mars in other signs may also be carrying irrational sentences around that you can discover when you are looking for the source of irritability. Mars in Capricorn might be saying, "Doesn't anyone else ever think ahead?" Mars in Aquarius might be asking, "Why is everyone always telling me what to do?" Uncovering the irrational sentence can, of course, be applied to many other areas of the chart besides Mars. Sentences about Venus might include the irrational demands we place on others in order to feel sure they love us. Sentences about the Sun might include the types of attention we believe we need in order to feel important.

The irritability related to Mars extends to the physical level as well, in that the part of the body associated with Mars' sign in our charts can show a spot where we are prone to irritation, inflammation, or infection. Metaphysically and psychosomatically speaking, each body part relates to certain life issues, just as the signs and houses do, and so the body has a language all its own, if we are willing to listen. According to this system of thought, when there is an eye infection, then perhaps we have seen something that enraged us but we were unwilling to take a closer look. If we suddenly have a sore throat, perhaps we have either held back from discussing something that made us sore, or perhaps we engaged in a heated quarrel that pained us but went unresolved. The

implications of this topic are much too broad for this volume, but so that I don't keep you in the dark, here are the body parts traditionally associated with each of the twelve signs:

<u>SIGN:</u>	<u>BODY PARTS:</u>	<u>SIGN:</u>	<u>BODY PARTS:</u>
Aries	Head	Libra	Kidneys
Taurus	Throat, neck glands	Scorpio	Sexual organs
Gemini	Lungs, hands	Sagittarius	Thighs, hips, liver
Cancer	Breast, stomach, womb	Capricorn	Knee, skeleton, skin
Leo	Back, heart	Aquarius	Ankles
Virgo	Intestines	Pisces	Feet

Mars and Self-Assertion

Books and seminars on self-assertiveness are no longer readily available. We now have court-mandated anger management training. Self-assertiveness balanced with consideration for others still strikes me as the healthiest expression of Mars. Self-assertive individuals know how to stand up for their own rights and desires without attacking other people or running over them. If they do not wish to do something, they say so rather than agreeing and then being resentful the whole time they are doing it. If someone is doing something to them that makes them angry, they tell them rather than suppress conflict until it builds up to something major.

People with Mars or Aries strong in their charts are usually self-assertive by nature, unless there are severe restrictions or difficulties with it⁸. Other people, such as those with Mars in Pisces or Mars in the twelfth, can have serious difficulty in asserting themselves and do so only in roundabout ways. Passive-aggressive people might be one example—those who express aggression or anger through dragging their heels, "forgetting" to do things, or failing. (Even rage or a drunken binge can be an indirect way of asserting yourself—"I will no longer live by your rules!") These are distorted and self-destructive ways of standing up for your right to do things your own way. How much better to learn to say no in the first place. For those with a difficult Mars, support and healing work may be needed to accomplish this redirection.

Mars and Sexuality

Mars is equated with sexuality in many books on astrology, but Mars is only one type or phase of sexuality—conquest and penetration. It is the active principle of sex, where you are doing it to the other person, with or without their participation. Sex has many other facets—the Venus principles of attraction and sharing, the Moon principle of responding, the Mercury principles of communication and playfulness...elements that go into making sex more enjoyable than the way that Mars would operate by itself. It would seem that each planet has its own part to play in rich and fully developed human sexuality.

⁸ For example, Sun in Aries opposite Neptune or Mars in the first conjunct Saturn.



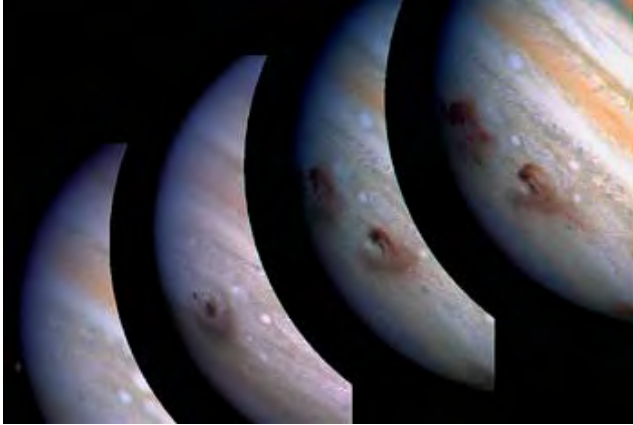
Again, Mars is not only a male prerogative—women can also enjoy taking the initiative sexually and being the more active partner. For both men and women, a study of Mars in your chart can help you discover the kinds of sexual activities that would be most fulfilling. For example, if you have Mars in Cancer or a Moon-Mars aspect, giving and receiving oral gratification may be very pleasurable. Having Mars in Leo might signify that a playful approach or play-acting little sexual dramas would be pleasurable. With Mars in Gemini, talking during sex or in preparation for it would heighten pleasure. By studying the Mars placement in your chart, you can identify some of your sexual needs and find greater fulfillment⁹.

Making Peace with "The God of War"

We have tried to understand how Mars' more outwardly negative expressions develop and how we can work our way out of relying on them. The more positive and constructive functions of Mars have been shown to be essential to the whole, healthy person. Some parts of Mars—like anger, competition, and sexual drive—may still be uncomfortable in our culture, but they are as normal and natural as breathing and just about as inevitable. To label them bad and try to suppress them is just as damaging as deciding that you despise one of your kidneys and having it taken out. Mars is neither a malefic nor a benefic, it just *is*.

⁹ Nope, I'm not going to go through all twelve Mars signs and tell you what the turn-ons are! Take a look at the table given earlier for what parts of the body your Mars sign rules and use your ingenuity.

JUPITER-THE OVERRATED BENEFIC



Jupiter is the ruler of the sign Sagittarius and is associated with the ninth house. We're going to find out that Jupiter often means OVER-doing things—OVEReating, OVERdrinking, and generally OVERindulging. Jupiter itself in astrology is often OVER-done—we students and practitioners OVERrate its helpfulness and OVERestimate how much it's going to do for us when it transits our charts. In this chapter, we will even discover that the planet Saturn—the topic

of the next chapter—has as much to do with good luck and success as Jupiter does... and that Jupiter, believe it or not, can create its own kind of bad luck. Through our explorations of Jupiter, we'll be aiming (like the Sagittarian archer) for a more balanced view of this planet, which is neither malefic nor benefic, but a little bit of both.

In astrology, Jupiter is the planet of growth and expansion, and Jupiterian people can be quite large. In the solar system, Jupiter is the giant. It is 1300 times the size of the earth; all the other planets in the solar system could fit inside it. Scientists have found some indication that Jupiter is not like the other planets, but may be star material. One confirmation of this is the fact that it gives off nine times the radiation it receives from the Sun. Likewise, astrologically, Jupiter is associated with benevolence, and spiritual teachers tell us that when we give, we receive back ninefold.

Jupiter and the Liver

In medical astrology, Jupiter rules the liver, and there is much to be said of this relationship. Just as Jupiter is the largest planet in the solar system, the liver is the largest organ in the body. The liver has a great many functions: it helps us digest and absorb our food by secreting bile; it stores and distributes excess nourishment; it filters out toxic material; and it helps us form and break down blood. The planet Jupiter also performs vital functions in our lives, some of which are similar to the liver. It is wisdom gained from digesting and absorbing experiences, so that we grow from our mistakes. It is also the wisdom not to repeat damaging (toxic) mistakes.

Jupiter is *exalted* in Cancer, the sign that rules nourishment¹. Jupiter rules wisdom, and when the body has had too much nourishment, the liver either stores or destroys the excess. A well-regulated liver knows how much is too much—and so does a *well-aspected* Jupiter²; however, both a diseased liver and an off-balance Jupiter cope poorly with excess

¹ The ancient astrology term *exalted* is used when a planet is placed in its best sign. For instance, Jupiter is exalted in Cancer, Mars is in its *exaltation* (i.e. is exalted) in Capricorn, and Venus is exalted in Pisces.

² When Jupiter is well-aspected, it forms mainly positive connections like trines with other planets,

and can't properly regulate it. Jupiter is concerned with growth and expansion; when we eat and drink to excess, the liver expands also to compensate. After years of overindulgence, the liver enlarges permanently and gets sick. If we live it up too long, we get "liverish." Jupiterian people—that is, people with the Sun, Moon, or several planets in Sagittarius or many aspects to Jupiter—often don't know when to stop indulging, and consequently some of them wind up with liver trouble.

Jupiter — the Broad View



People born under Jupiter's sign, Sagittarius, love to roam and can also seem scattered all over the place in their thoughts and speech—but if you are able to pin them down, there is a connection between their diverse explorations. Jupiter's meanings also seem scattered and far-reaching, but we'll find the connections as we go along.

We'll discover in a later section how good luck, one of the supposed attributes of Jupiter, has as its components some of the other qualities of Jupiter, like enthusiasm, wisdom, philosophy, and benevolence. Another seemingly unconnected set of meanings of both Jupiter and the associated ninth house, is higher education, foreign travel, law, and religion.

In the medieval era, this hodgepodge of meanings would never have been questioned, because it would have been obvious. Centers of learning were few and far between, and students had to travel long distances to get an education. Even now, we say that travel broadens, recognizing that exposure to other cultures and other ways of doing things gives us a broader perspective on life and on the standards and values of our own culture. Those who have made pilgrimages understand the connection between religion and travel.

Many major religions traveled far from their place of origin and were brought to the new locale by foreign travelers or missionaries. The tie between religion and education has loosened only in the past century. In medieval times, the only educated people were monks and nobles, and the monks taught the nobles. Young men who wanted an education often had to join a monastery to get it. The church founded the first colleges, even in the United States.

The connections between religion and law have also been obscured by time but are quite important. The first laws were based on religious edicts, like the *Mosaic code*. The founders of the U.S. made a specific issue of the separation of church and state, in order to form a truly independent government. Churches have a powerful legislative voice, such as in the anti-abortion battles everywhere and in the anti-divorce laws that were in effect in Catholic countries for so long. Law and foreign countries are connected in that the Napoleonic code and certain other codes of law were adopted in numerous foreign lands. Law was one of the earliest and foremost courses of study in the European universities.



especially Venus, Mercury, the Sun, or the Moon.

The various meanings of Jupiter and the ninth house (higher education, foreign travel, law, and religion) are related historically, but are also related on less concrete levels. They arise out of the human urge to go beyond the narrow world of self and relate to the larger context of society. In the astrological chart, issues related to Jupiter and beyond are no longer only concerned with just the self (the Sun and Moon), or the self and intimate ties (Mercury, Venus, Mars). Instead, these planets show where the self fits in the global view of life.

Jupiter in the various signs indicates how we seek to expand and grow within society. For instance, I know an English professor who has Jupiter in communication-oriented Gemini. A Jupiter in Pisces person might grow a great deal thorough serving people in prisons or other institutions. A Jupiter in Capricorn person can serve a vital function as an administrator. A Jupiter in Virgo person usually has many practical skills and an eagerness to teach those skills to others.

Jupiter and Gambling

There are even, you may be surprised to learn, connections between education, foreign places, religion, and that other Jupiterian pursuit, gambling³. The sailing of the Mayflower to colonize the New World was financed by a lottery in England. Yale, Harvard, and Dartmouth were built with funds raised by a lottery. Lotteries supplied funds to form the Revolutionary army and win American independence. Even today, some proceeds of legalized lotteries finance education. In certain states, bingo and "Las Vegas Nights" are legal only so long as a church runs them. Finally, churches and other charities are perpetually selling raffle tickets for some long-shot dream car.

Many Jupiterian people love to gamble, though others never so much as buy a lottery ticket, for their "high" comes from taking other kinds of risks. Some of the risks are wonderful ones—like taking the risk of opening up to new ideas or to experiences you have always dreamed of—while others take foolhardy risks out of the misplaced belief that they are divinely protected. However, some Jupiterians who do gamble can become compulsive about it, especially those with Mars-Jupiter aspects.



In moderation, though, gambling can have some positive effects. Jupiter correlates with optimism, and pessimistic people rarely do much gambling. The cockeyed optimist keeps on playing, despite repeated losses, knowing the odds are against him, because he doesn't really believe he can lose. Maybe he just lost a bundle, but this time, mind you, he's sure to win. Don't tell him different, because he'll turn a deaf ear. "Are you trying to jinx me or something?"

Closely related to optimism is hope, and none of us could go on without it. For many people stuck in slums, in boring jobs, or in life situations where they feel hopeless, a little gambling keeps their hopes alive. That dollar a slum dweller puts on a lottery ticket provides a reason to live through today and a hope that tomorrow will magically put an

³ Mario Puzo, *Inside Las Vegas*, Grosset and Dunlap, 1976. This quote and others in this chapter are taken from the excerpt in *Book Digest* May 7, pp. 33-57.

end to the nightmare.

Mario Puzo, who wrote *The Godfather*, was once a compulsive gambler and writes eloquently about it with a great deal of insight. In his book, *Inside Las Vegas*, he says:

“What possesses a group of mature people who know what life is all about to think that gambling can solve their problems? Desperation, that's what, and something to put a little spice in your life. [In psychiatric explanations for gambling]... what gets left out are the solace and pleasure it's brought countless millions living in worlds without hope and without those dreams essential to life.”

People who have more to live for and who have hope for the future are not so prone to compulsive gambling. Puzo confirms this, in explaining why he quit gambling:

“Now for the first time in my life, making more money than I have ever made in my life ... I have come to the decision that I cannot afford, economically, to gamble. The simple reason being that to gamble is to risk, that is to approach the 'ruin factor.' When I was poor the ruin factor was not important. Hell, I was ruined anyway.”

Closely akin to this connection between poverty and gambling is the fixation so many people today have on that other Jupiterian long shot, the lawsuit. For many, the only way they can envision out of their financial woes is to hit the lottery or win a big lawsuit. Mind you, many of their woes came about through negative expressions of Jupiter—overspending, overextending their credit, and overindulging in luxuries they couldn't afford as they insisted on living beyond their means. In a similar way, people from poor countries throughout the world have acted upon the Jupiterian hope of emigrating to a foreign country to seek their fortune.

As we've seen, Jupiter is related to faith and religion. The connection gambling has with faith is easy to see--faith is an upwardly directed extension of hope and optimism. But religion? Here are some very interesting insights by Puzo:

“The truth is that gambling is a primitive religious instinct peculiar to our species ... Religious leaders, those supreme hustlers of the long shot, are revered, but gamblers are sneered at because most people think of gambling as a foolish vice.

“It's not that you want to lose what you've won, it's just that you don't believe it's possible to lose. When winning, you are convinced God loves you. It is as close as I have ever come in my life to a religious feeling. Or to being a wonder-struck child.

“Is that so different from these religious fanatics who think that after death they will go to their particular heaven? I think the whole magic power of gambling lies in its essential purity of endeavor, in its absence of guilt. No matter what our character, no matter what our behavior, no matter if we are ugly, unkind, murderers, saints, guilty sinner, foolish, or wise, we *can* get lucky.”

Ready to accept that religion and gambling are connected? After all, many of the tools of divination we use in spiritual studies are ruled by the laws of chance—laying out the Tarot cards, throwing the *I Ching*, or setting up a horary chart. Yet we believe that some higher power is arranging the cards, the coins, or the horary chart into a spiritually meaningful pattern that will elucidate our lives. Is that so far removed from the faith a gambler exercises?

To gamble successfully, you have to have another Jupiter trait—wisdom. You have to know the odds; in the numbers game, for instance, your chances of winning are 1 in 999, but in blackjack you have a better than even chance. You have to know that your chances of winning in lotteries and at slot machines are miniscule. If you still enjoy



the thrill of it, that rush of adrenaline while you wait for the results, do it so long as you regard it as entertainment. But the compulsive gambler will believe he can beat the odds and pours large sums of money into hopeless games.

The bad luck that can come from gambling, then, also relates to Jupiterian traits—overindulgence, over-confidence, and foolish optimism. In its place and in moderation, gambling can have some positive effects. It gives hope to the hopeless, excitement to people whose lives are dull, and a feeling of divine grace in those moments when we actually win. As we saw earlier, gambling has even financed some worthwhile institutions. As with all things, however, balance and wisdom are needed to keep what can be a harmless pastime from becoming a self-destructive obsession.



Jupiter and Saturn — Co-Rulers of Luck and Success



I've been a fairly lucky person all my life, and once, after a run of especially good luck, I set about analyzing it.⁴ I felt that perhaps by understanding my luck, I

could not only increase it for myself, but perhaps also teach my heretofore unconscious "methods" to others who haven't been so fortunate. Naturally, I thought a great deal about Jupiter, the planet traditionally associated with good luck, but I was quite surprised to discover Saturn has as much or more to do with luck as Jupiter.

Saturn? I know it's called "the greater malefic" and "the grim reaper," and it's supposed to bring on all kinds of misfortune. If you really delve into it, though, Saturn doesn't bring anything on you that you haven't already brought on yourself... and if what you've done is lay the *foundations* for good luck, then Saturn will bring you better and longer lasting "luck" than you ever had under Jupiter.

Let me give you an example. Saturn once was square my Midheaven for six weeks from the twelfth house. Many traditional astrologers would say I was in for some real *bad* luck from "the old taskmaster." What happened was perhaps the luckiest break in my life up to that point—I was promoted to head social worker in the hospital where I worked. I happened to be the only person on the scene with *most* of the right qualifications when the position became vacant—and I had been working there for only four months! In the normal course of events, I wouldn't have been eligible for that kind of position for about five more years. I did have the needed abilities, but was also in the right place at the right time. So Saturn isn't necessarily the bad influence people think it is.

Actually, much of what other people label luck isn't Jupiter at all, but very Saturnian in nature...not luck, but rather hard work, self-discipline, and preparation that finally paid off.

⁴2. This segment originally appeared in *Astrology Guide*, 8/75 issue, as "Change Your Luck—Now and Forever." It is reprinted with the permission of Sterling Publications, Inc. © 1975 Sterling Publications.

You may have sat up nights polishing your writing technique. Then when you are finally good enough to break into important magazines, less-disciplined writers say, "I wish I had your luck!" It reminds me of the statement by actor Bill Macey at the time he was involved in a hit television series. He said, "I put in 25 years of hard work to become an overnight success." Isn't Saturn as much responsible for that kind of luck as Jupiter?

Another Saturnian characteristic that contributes a great deal to luck is *timing*. You may have everything going for you—a great idea, good financial backing, and all the right people working on it—but unless the timing is right, you may fail. There is a saying that goes, "There is nothing so powerful as an idea whose time has come." This is as true in your career or personal life as in anything else. The "lucky" person knows instinctively the right time to ask for a raise, to launch that campaign, or to make that long-contemplated move. Life can be like a game of Slapjack— unless you have that split-second timing, you can miss out on many great opportunities.

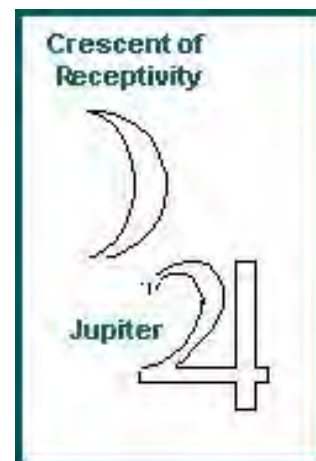
We'll learn more about Saturn in the next chapter, but briefly, Saturnian traits that are important to luck and success include persistence, self-discipline and follow-through. You may have the nicest stroke of luck come your way, but miss out unless you are already prepared to take advantage of it; or you may actually be given the opportunity, but unless you have the self-discipline to follow up with hard work, the luck will evaporate. What I've come to understand is that Saturn and Jupiter are the co-rulers of luck, and they are intricately related. This is clear if we refer to the glyphs for the two planets and note that in some older versions, like those seen here, the two are inverted versions of one another.



Let's look at the component meanings of the planet Jupiter to see how they increase our understanding of luck. One of the meanings of Jupiter is wisdom, and a great deal of what people label luck is actually wisdom, foresight, intelligence or just plain good sense. No one wants to admit that they weren't as smart as you were about something, so they say, "You were lucky." I suspect that the person who is 'lucky' with stocks or real estate, for example, is often the person with the foresight to see what investments will pay off.

Luck is being the right person in the right place at the right time. Still, some kind of canny evaluation has to occur for the "lucky" person to know, consciously or unconsciously, that he was the right person, that this was the right place, and to have been there at the psychologically right time. I have also been the wrong person in the wrong place at the wrong time, but have never suffered any real "bad luck" from it, because I have the sense not to compound the error by investing much of myself in it or staying very long.

This brings us to another component of good luck—not one you find among traditional attributes of Jupiter, but returning to the glyph for Jupiter, you could wonder why it has been ignored for so long. The crescent of receptivity—the half-moon shape in the diagram at the right—is the first thing you draw in making Jupiter's glyph, and I have come to realize that receptivity is a large part of my good luck. If you have a closed mind and insist that things can only be done one way, you limit yourself and your opportunities. You might be the right person in the right place at the right time, but if you refuse to even consider the right idea,



you lose out, and the more receptive person will grab up the luck and run with it.

One part of receptivity is the ability to flow with events. We're not talking about being wishy-washy... I'm working hard and have long-range goals in mind, but my specific goals for today can change at any time in the light of new information or experience. A lot of my "lucky breaks" came about because I am willing to change or postpone my game plan at the drop of a hat if something better comes along, whereas others may spend a lot of time dithering about it and lose the chance.

People who aren't lucky are often the opposite of receptive—having traits akin to friction or resistance in physics. These people can't flow with life because they put so many things in the way—old ideas and patterns of behavior prefaced by "I can't"/"I won't"/"I should"/"I shouldn't"/"We've always"/"We've never" ...and on and on. These preconceived notions about how things should be done get in the way, because luck often depends on receptivity to a new idea. I am not implying that you should sacrifice moral principles but do sacrifice outworn and outmoded ideas about yourself, about ways to do things, and about courses of action. Don't be bound to follow a course of action just because you've always done it that way.

Gambling is attributed to Jupiter, and you have to be willing to gamble on something in order to have any luck at all—good or bad. Remember, when we talk about luck, we're not just talking about cards and dice, we're talking about all the different kinds of risks you take in the course of your life. If you don't dare to risk yourself, you'll never move ahead. Jupiter by itself only shows our urge to gamble—and many people gamble when they shouldn't—but this is where Saturn again plays its part in good luck. The canny Saturnian individual instinctively takes only the calculated risk, betting on the sure thing that is most likely to pay off. This is part of the reason the professional gambler is consistently "lucky," and I think all successful people are professional gamblers at heart.

Openness and extroversion are also Jupiter traits, and they play a part in success too. One executive analyzed the circumstances that led to the big job offers in successful executives' lives. He found that, in the majority of cases, they arose through a chain of acquaintances. He found that lucky people were gregarious and took an interest in people. In turn, their openness also made it easy for other people to approach them in a friendly manner. He concluded that the bigger your web of friendly connections, the greater your odds of finding that pot-of-gold opportunity. Apparently, the old saying about "It's who you know that counts" is true. You make your own luck by forming positive connections with people—not that this should be our purpose in making friends or being helpful, but it can be an outgrowth of it.

Jupiterian types are noted for being optimistic and enthusiastic, and the relationship between these personal qualities and good luck is significant. Enthusiasm is contagious and makes others more receptive. Out of two equally qualified people, who is more likely to be hired...the depressed, apathetic person or the enthusiastic ball of fire? Thus, enthusiastic people often have more luck coming their way—they land the job, they make the sale, they find their love. So, what does optimism have to do with luck? It's considered quite wise these days to be a pessimist, to be down on any new idea before it's even tried, and to be cynical. People who think this way consistently squelch their own best ideas and impulses and don't take the risks required to be lucky. If they want to do that to themselves, that's their prerogative, but what concerns me is that cynics infect other people with their cynicism and wind up discouraging the creativity and initiative our world really needs.

Yes, optimism does contribute to good luck. The luck people have had with things like positive thinking, the Buddhist chant *nam myoho renge kyo*, and the authentically

lucky talisman are based on the deep metaphysical principle that your outer experience is shaped by your persistent patterns of thinking. If you believe that you are going to be lucky, your chances of good luck are increased. If you believe, "I have nothing but bad luck," that will also prove true.

This leads us naturally to another area that Jupiter rules—philosophy. What does being philosophical have to do with luck? Well, our experience only has relevance in terms of how we evaluate it. If you believe that you are a lucky person, then you evaluate your experiences as "lucky" more often than the pessimistic person, even when your experiences are similar.

I consider myself very lucky that some of the things I yearned for so passionately years ago never came to pass. In the light of greater experience and insight, I can see now that they would have been devastating. A pessimistic individual, suffering exactly the same disappointment, might never see that it would have been bad for him if he'd gotten his wish and might go through the rest of life brooding about this as just another example of his rotten luck. I am philosophical enough, then, to see that my long-range good fortune has little to do with the subjective disappointments of the moment that pessimists cling to as proof of their bad luck. What effect does this philosophical approach or lack of it have on current or future "luck?" Insofar as it affects our self-concept and willingness to take risks, the belief that you are basically lucky or unlucky often becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Along with philosophy, benevolence is often pointed to as a characteristic of Jupiter. Many of the great financiers built their vast fortunes on the principle of tithing—that is, giving ten percent of their earnings to charity. They did it faithfully, right from the beginning when they didn't have much to spare. They didn't wait until they had money to start giving, and neither should you. Isn't it true that the more you put into something the more you get out of it? The benefits of giving are too complex to be covered here. Saturn again plays a part in helping you give responsibly rather than indiscriminately. Indiscriminate giving often has a bad effect—both on the giver and the receiver. (Indiscriminate giving, which has tinges of rescuing, are more a function of Neptune than of Jupiter.)

There is another kind of luck I frequently have that must be a combination of Jupiter and Saturn. One of my mottoes is "Virtue is its own reward," because I often have a stroke of luck when I am doing something disagreeable and tedious, often for someone else, just because it is the right thing to do. For instance, in attempting to give a responsible answer, complete with statistics, to a reader who disagreed vehemently with something I wrote, I came up with enough material and ideas for another good article. If I had ignored or angrily destroyed the insulting letter, none of my thinking on the matter would have been clarified. Many people at least subconsciously connect virtue with luck, because a frequent comment about a lucky break is, "You must be living right."

Jupiter and Bad Luck

We make our own bad luck just as often and as surely as we make our good luck. In fact, I know a number of people who go to a great deal of trouble to do so. One of the ways we do this is by blinding ourselves to the consequences of our actions. We all know people who constantly ask for trouble and eventually get it. This might be seen as negative Jupiter—"pushing your luck" and a kind of stupid optimism or over-confidence, that says, "I won't get caught," or "It can't happen to me." In the end, you can't

consistently get away with pushing your luck. If you keep it up and finally trip over the consequences, don't blame Saturn for your bad luck, blame yourself. Negligence of responsibilities and ignoring the consequences of our acts are two characteristics that often reap "bad luck."

Another thing you discover in listening to monologues by "unlucky" people is that their bad luck has a pattern to it that is too blatant to be accidental. What do you say to a woman with an alcoholic father who has the "bad luck" to marry three men in succession who turn out to be alcoholics? Do you say, "you need a lucky charm," or do you say, "You need help"? Counseling or self-help groups can help such people understand and correct the unconscious reasons for such self-defeating patterns. (Having a psychologically-aware astrologer interpret the chart can be a good start for getting insight into this kind of persistent problem.)

One final component of Jupiter is the ability to learn from experience, and many unlucky people don't seem to be able to do so. They keep on making the same mistakes over and over and then say, "It's just my bad luck." **Learn the habit of going over such situations in your mind to find out what went wrong. You can then take action to correct the causes and plan how to handle such situations in the future.**

Traditionally, Jupiter in the twelfth house is thought to be a fortunate placement. There are moments of divine inspiration, and the cavalry typically arrives at the last moment to rescue the native who is in need of it. Both tendencies are true enough, yet the twelfth is also the house of self-undoing. All too often, the Jupiter in the twelfth house person believes, "God's on my side," and so overindulges to a destructive extent and takes too many foolish risks. The native may fearlessly plunge into unwise courses of action which are attributed to divine inspiration, but which are really the whisperings of the unconscious. Yes, the cavalry arrives at the last moment--but when the cavalry has to be mobilized time and time again due to the native's inappropriate risk-taking, those last minute rescues are self-defeating.

In some kinds of seeming misfortune, there is a method to the madness. I worked in clinics with unmarried mothers for years, and it was often clear that no matter how much they complained about their bad luck in "getting caught," the pregnancy was unconsciously quite deliberate. It served many different needs, like the need to retreat from a threatening success that might demand too much of them. Just as there are people who secretly enjoy ill health, there are people who enjoy their bad luck. They view themselves as dramatic, tragic figures, entitled to extra attention. There are certain cultures where it bestows quite a bit of status to be this sort of tragic figure. I personally could do without it...wouldn't you rather be quietly, consistently lucky than dramatically unlucky?

Jupiter — Overrated or Not?

We've looked at the many facets of Jupiter, trying to find the overriding connections between them (a typically Jupiterian activity!). In considering the elements that make good luck, good fortune, and success, we found that no more luck comes from Jupiter than from Saturn,



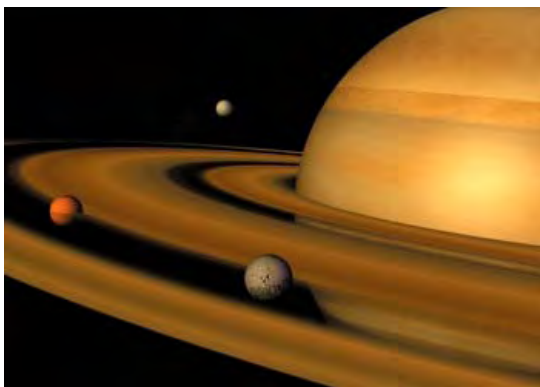
that both have a role to play in our success if used positively. We've learned that the misuse of Jupiterian energies can bring as much bad luck as any so-called malefic. What is important in using the Jupiterian energies within us is balance—the same need we've been finding in studying the role of each of the planets in our lives.

TO SATURN, WITH LOVE¹

Among the hundreds of phobias is one that hasn't made the dictionaries yet, but will be there as soon as lexicographers get wise to astrology. I'm referring to **Saturnophobia**, a neurosis that affects only astrologers and their students and clients. Since this group includes a growing number of people, Saturnophobia could some day be a common mental health problem. Saturnophobia, the fear of the planet Saturn and its astrological correlations, is not as inhibiting as claustrophobia, agoraphobia, or *triskidekaphobia* (fear of the number 13), but it does hold back spiritual growth. One of the so-called malefic planets, Saturn was traditionally referred to as **the greater malefic**, **the old taskmaster**, or even **the grim reaper**—names that contribute no small amount to astrology students' dread of it. Since knowledge can dispel fear, let's look at exactly what these students are worried about.

People going through major Saturn transits can chafe at seemingly endless delays in realizing their goals, can suffer crashes of structures in their lives that are not solidly built, and can be haunted by depression or the feeling that they are growing old. Saturn represents the Reality Principle—that is, the piercing of denial and the ensuing confrontation with truth. Though most of us prefer to cherish our illusions, we have to face reality during Saturn transits—another reason it is called a malefic. But reality was always there, and it is our fault, not Saturn's, if we've avoided facing it. Myself, I consider Saturn one of the most benefic astrological influences, for we gain so much when we use its transits as windows for growth. Perhaps by the end of this chapter you will agree with me. I always say that if you take care of Saturn, Saturn will take care of you.

Saturn's Glyph and Physical Form



Saturn is beautiful. If you've ever seen it through a telescope, you know that pictures don't do it justice. Its luminescence, especially, is hard to capture on film. It is interesting to speculate about the metaphysical meaning of Saturn's rings. How can it be called a *malefic* when it wears a halo? The rings suggest the tremendous spiritual strength that can come from using Saturn well, and I do think Saturn and its cycles represent a spiritual turning point. Until we master the demands of Saturn, the energies of the planets beyond it—Uranus, Neptune, and Pluto—can be very difficult to express constructively.

¹ This chapter originally appeared in *Astrology Guide*, the 7/77 issue, ©1977, Sterling Publications. It is reprinted with their permission.

Saturn viewed from the side, as we usually see it, is like the photo shown above. If you changed perspectives and saw Saturn from millions of miles above, it would look like the glyph for the Sun. I do believe there is a strong link between Saturn and the Sun. Your real self (the Sun) only shines through in its fullest strength and development as you mature—especially after the “Saturn Return” at age 29, an astrological landmark we will soon discuss.



Saturn deals with **time**, and the rings that surround this planet suggest that time is circular or cyclic, that patterns are always repeating themselves. They remind us that we can't just consider one point in time when making a major decision, but must consider everything relevant that went before it and everything that will come after. This connection between Saturn's rings and time is confirmed by the difficulty any astrologer has in talking about Saturn without referring to its cycles and what they mean in our lives.

A basic rule of architecture is that form follows function, and that must be also true of celestial architecture, because Saturn's rings are strongly correlated with the functions of Saturn in our lives. The discovery, in the 1970s, that Uranus also has rings also dovetails with celestial architecture, because, after Saturn, the cycles of Uranus seem to be the next most important in marking transitions in the human life cycle. The fact that both planets have rings points to a fraternal association between Saturn and Uranus, and their cycles mesh at key ages: around 21, 42, 63, and 84.

Rod Chase pointed out the significance of Saturn's density. Even though it is 95 times the size of the earth, it is so light that it would float in one of our oceans if we could set it there. He felt this shows that we shouldn't feel burdened down by Saturn and its responsibilities, but should undertake them with a light heart.

The glyph for Saturn is written in several ways, but the more old-fashioned rendering of the glyph represents a sickle. While it is Saturnophobic to call Saturn 'the *grim* reaper,' this planet does signify reaping what you have sown. **If you've sown and tilled things that are good for you, Saturn brings a joyous harvest—you are rewarded by getting what you richly deserve.** If what you've sown is harmful for you or others, then Saturn harvests that too. People view Saturn and karma as punitive, but it is an impersonal principle that operates regardless of whether you're putting it to good or a harmful use. Saturn is *not* out to get you. I always say that if you do right by Saturn, Saturn will do right by you!



Saturn — Plus and Minus

Saturn has many useful traits, and without them we would accomplish little of lasting worth. I have found it difficult, however, to separate Saturn's traits into lists of positive and negative, because most of the less desirable uses are only exaggerations of the positive.

This is true of all the planets to some extent, but it seems especially true of Saturn. Let me show you what I mean.



In the human body, Saturn rules the skeletal system—the bones, cartilage, and skin that give us our shape and keep us from flopping all over like jellyfish. In our lives, Saturn also represents structure, form, and how well you are able to organize. The sign and aspects of natal Saturn show how well we deal with structure. They also show the type of order that works best for us and the areas where we are most organized.

For instance, people with Saturn in Gemini may develop an excellent filing system for their myriad of paperwork because that is their priority, but they may not have the faintest idea what's at the bottom of that nightmare closet in their hall. The fellow with Saturn in the sixth house may be very organized about his work but have trouble keeping track of social engagements. Being *too* organized is a negative Saturnian² trait—the kind of person who compulsively makes a list for everything, then makes a list of all the lists. We can't be organized and structured in every area of life without sacrificing a great deal of spontaneity and pleasure in simply living each moment.

Saturn has to do with rocks, and positive Saturnian types are a "rock of Gibraltar"—mature, stable, reliable. They have learned to build their house on rock rather than sand, knowing their efforts have more permanency when done carefully and with solid foundations. This can be carried to an extreme, of course, resulting in the Saturnian who is too solid and rigid. The source of such rigidity is often anxiety, which Saturnians are extremely prone to experiencing. They can be worrywarts because they can see all too clearly what MIGHT go wrong.

Not content with small rocks, Saturn and Capricorn are also connected with mountains, and these people are mountain climbers at heart. They aim for the heights, and they prepare carefully for their long climb to success,



² **Saturnians** include people with important planets in Capricorn or in the tenth house—which is associated with Saturn and Capricorn. They also include those whose charts have Saturn on the Ascendant or Midheaven, aspecting their Sun or Moon, or with numerous aspects to Saturn.

eliminating all that's unnecessary. They plan ahead and set priorities. Saturnians who carry these qualities too far are ambitious to the point of ruthlessness, using people—or climbing right over them—in order to reach their goals.

Many Capricornian or Saturnian people have trouble with their knees, the part of the body associated with Capricorn. Since every physical problem has its metaphysical causes, the cause here is often a lack of flexibility in the personality. Knees have to bend, but the too-rigid Saturnian has trouble bending with the needs of the moment. To get down on your knees is to show humility, and, while the Saturnian can be very self-critical, there is nonetheless a great lack of humility in many of them. ("I may be terribly imperfect, but I'm miles ahead of the rest of you.") My mentor, Rod Chase, had a wonderful motto for Capricorn that says it all, "In order to climb the mountain, you've got to bend your knees."

Self-discipline is an important positive trait associates with Saturn. Without it, how can we accomplish anything major? Patience, perseverance, and Spartan avoidance of distracting temptations are all Saturnian virtues, facets of self-discipline. Again, self-discipline in every area is impossible unless we ignore human needs and pleasures. Executives who neglect their families for work and more work probably consider themselves admirably self-disciplined, but they are not living a balanced lifestyle. Saturn transits, properly used, are great opportunities to increase our self-discipline, not only in the area of the chart involved, but in the core of our being as well. (This chapter on Saturn is being written on a transit of Saturn to my Mars that many astrologers would consider difficult. Instead, I've been disciplining and conserving energy and setting priorities so this book can be written.)

A primary lesson of Saturn is responsibility. Blaming others for what happens to you is a mark of immaturity. Spiritual teachers and psychotherapists agree that once you have passed childhood, you are responsible for yourself and your actions. If Saturn in your chart is a problem area, sit down and honestly ask yourself, "Am I passing the buck? What is my part in this problem? Where do I neglect my commitments to myself and others?" Spiritual teachers say it is better to do this sort of self-examination on a daily basis, or at least at regular intervals, so that you resolve your karma as you go along, rather than be left to do it at the end of life.

People with a strong Saturn often take on heavy responsibilities from a young age...the kind of child who is forced to be an adult. The capacity to accept responsibility, of course, is a prerequisite for success, but the person who can't delegate some of that responsibility to others pays a tremendous personal cost and also robs others of opportunities to grow and learn. **When Saturn, Capricorn, or the associated tenth house are strong natively or by transit, this often indicates opportunities to move up into administration. The only way to be truly successful and comfortable as an administrator is to learn how to delegate and teach the needed skills to employees.** If you hesitate to delegate, feeling that others will let you down, you have a responsibility to teach and supervise them in fulfilling their tasks.



Saturnians are realistic... another reason for their success. They are too practical to invest their energies in something that won't work out, and they can foresee the consequences of an action because they take a long-range view. They can sometimes be too realistic... lacking imagination, being first-order wet blankets who are afraid to take a chance, and possibly balancing on that fine dividing line between pragmatism and opportunism... exaggerating their basically constructive traits.

Saturnian people are serious, a characteristic that's not properly valued in our hedonistic society. The youthful Saturnian, especially, is often unappreciated by peers. Even the Saturnian ideal of working to **build character** is nearly archaic in a cynical society where business practices are increasingly deceitful and driven by the bottom line. Still, a serious, "take care of business" approach can help accomplish a great deal. Once on that path, it is easy to overbalance toward the negative end of the Saturn spectrum and become somber, melancholy, and depressed. Saturnophobia may not be in the dictionary yet, but **saturnine** is, meaning gloomy. Chronic depression, though sometimes biological and even hereditary, can also be attributed to feeling blocked at treasured hopes and dreams. When Saturnian types begin working toward a worthwhile goal; they often stop feeling depressed. Likewise, under a Saturn transit, we can be depressed unless we use that time to be serious and work hard on something meaningful.

Perfectionism is a trait attributed to Saturn and Capricorn people, but again can represent a constructive quality gone overboard. Saturnians are concerned with high standards and performing to the best of their ability. Many of the most professional people I know are Capricorns—in the positive sense of knowing their business and doing it well, with integrity. Over the years, most of my personal physicians have been Capricorns, and I wouldn't have it any other way.

They can be professional in less desirable senses of the word too—overly formal, hierarchical, and bound by rigid procedures. In their concern for quality and correctness, Saturnians can be too perfectionistic with themselves and others. Perfectionism can even get in the way of accomplishment because compulsively redoing tasks that are already good enough to be functional wastes time that could be used to move ahead. Or, their standards for some endeavor may be so high that they are even afraid to try.



Saturn's Cycles and Transits

We spoke earlier about Saturn's rings, associating them with the cycles of Saturn. We won't discuss the cycles in detail here, but briefly, Saturn's complete cycle around the Sun takes 29.4 years. The hard aspects of Saturn (squares and oppositions) take place each seven years, so each 7-year period ends with a new phase of maturing and taking stock of our lives. We become true adults at about the age of 28-29, when Saturn has made a complete orbit around the Sun from where it was when we were born—a period we call the **Saturn return**. These eras occur when we are 28-30 years old (the first Saturn

Return) and 56-8 years old (the second Saturn Return). These Returns are considered significant milestones in the human maturation cycle.

The seven-year phases between Saturn aspects to natal Saturn are the normal stress periods of living and growing, which psychologists call *normative crises* (for example, adolescent turmoil at 14, or moving out on your own at 21). We all go through these crises, but if your natal Saturn has difficult aspects, (hard aspects to the Sun, Moon, Ascendant, Pluto, or Neptune, for instance), these periods can be more difficult. If you are a Saturnian person, you must learn to live harmoniously with Saturn and put it to good use. Periods like your Saturn Return or other Saturn transits are opportunities to change from misuses of Saturn and to better uses. While 21 is popularly considered our coming of age, in reality it is just an entry-level position into adulthood. The person who is 28-30 has now faced most of the challenges of becoming a seasoned adult.

Saturn has to do with maturing and aging, and the positive Saturnian is mature. Saturn is a time marker, but shouldn't be devastating unless we are only marking time. For those who are growing and developing steadily through persistent effort, aging holds little regret because they're not getting older; they're getting better. In fact, in the very areas where they seemed to have been late bloomers, Saturnians often come into their own in some later phases of their Saturn cycles. (If I may be allowed to be a proud aunt, the photo at the side is of my niece Shelley, who at the age of 35 attained her lifelong goal of a college degree. The photo appeared on the cover of her local newspaper.)



Many young Saturnians are too old for their age and not comfortable with their peers. Their comfort level improves with age, especially as they approach the age where Saturnian qualities like maturity and caution are expected due to responsibilities of a career or family. Also, they are more at ease once they find a sense of security and self-worth through their accomplishments, so that the more difficult expressions such as insecurity and self-condemnation improve.

Saturn transits force you to face up to reality... a jolt if you've been fooling yourself about the problems you face. But the positive result is that once you've finished emoting about the unfairness of it all, you can get to work on establishing more substantial and solid foundations. Foundation building may not be as much fun as drifting and dreaming on a pink cloud, but the bank doesn't take pink clouds as collateral. Saturn is the wisdom gained from experience... even if you're thickheaded and your alma mater is the School of Hard Knocks.

Many negative situations that arise under Saturn transits result from not using Saturn in a positive way in the first place. If you haven't developed self-discipline, a Saturn transit might bring the loss of something you haven't been disciplined about. Discipline imposed from the outside is meant to foster discipline from within. If you've built your house on the sand, figuratively speaking, a Saturn transit might level the house and make

you go back to rebuild more solid foundations. Saturn is not punitive, but an impartial rectification of error—the Celestial Computer kicking your input back for correction because "it does not compute."

Used constructively, a Saturn transit can help develop stability, strength of character, self-discipline, and a new ability to organize and structure life. If you've exercised some of these traits already in the area affected by the transit, then it will be a period of further growth in that area and a reaping of the reward for what you've already sowed.

Saturn — The Pearl in the Oyster

The house and sign placement of Saturn in natal charts is sometimes a trouble spot where we experience delays and obstacles. This is not a pleasurable experience, but it is often through meeting and overcoming adversity that we achieve something worthwhile. The Greek orator Demosthenes started his career by working to overcome a speech impediment and became such a skilled speaker that he is legendary, centuries later. With hard work, self-discipline, and determination, Saturn's placement in your chart can lead to something great.



Another metaphor about Saturn may demonstrate this principle more clearly. I compare Saturn to the grain of sand inside an oyster. The sand frustrates and irritates the oyster, which probably wonders why it is being singled out this way, until it finally mobilizes its defenses. It builds and builds, until it has finally created a lovely pearl. We find the pearl beautiful and valuable, but the oyster may very well consider it a great affliction. So, too, problems we struggle with due to Saturn's natal and transiting placements may feel uncomfortable on a day-to-day basis, but by working at them in the long run, we may be building something very fine. Look at your Saturn as a pearl in the making, and you'll work with it better.

CHIRON AND WHOLENESS

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A NOTE from Donna: Foremost among the asteroids studied by astrologers has been Chiron, which orbits between Saturn and Uranus. I am no expert on its meaning, and so, to meet the needs of today's readers, I asked my long-time friend and respected colleague, Joyce Mason, to contribute a chapter on Chiron, which is included here with her permission. Joyce is a writer and astrologer on hiatus from an eclectic practice including astrology, tarot, flower essences, and dreamwork. Teamed with astrologer Dale O'Brien, she helped in the continuing discovery of Chiron by producing the international newsletter, *Chironicles*, from 1992-1995. Most of her articles on Chiron are available on www.aplaceinspace.net. Contact her at wordmonger@starstream.net.

The many facets of Chiron fit into a single concept—**wholeness**. Chiron in our charts is the key to what we have to work with and resolve in order to feel fulfilled. Yes, there's actually a cosmic hint! Chiron is also the force within us that translates "signs" and divine inspirations into practical application in daily living, bridging Heaven to Earth. We are spirits having a human experience. When we remember to bring that spirit into everyday situations, life is full of meaning and startlingly simple answers. We're living full, spirited lives.

Wholeness, however, involves a journey—and getting there is not always half the fun. Chiron is associated with lingering wounds that are difficult to heal and that must be borne as best we can without remaining stuck in them and interrupting our journey. Another important aspect of this gradual process toward feeling complete involves **sharing our talents**. That means Chiron has a very special role in our pursuing what we love for our own satisfaction and for the benefit of others—that one thing that each of us does like nobody else.

CHIRON, Plus and Minus

People with Chiron prominent¹ in the natal chart are likely to excel at problem solving, healing (especially of the holistic variety), and doing the most healing or whole-making work of all—acting as bridges between their own inner conflict and conflicts among others. Those with Chiron emphasized can truly bring spirituality down to earth, often with divine irreverence. A great example is New Age comedian, Swami Beyondananda, whose Chiron-Jupiter conjunction helps him deliver the punch line of many of Chiron's teachings with a light touch that triggers laughter.



¹ Chiron is considered prominent when in aspect to the Sun or Moon, or placed in the first or tenth houses, especially near the Ascendant or Midheaven. When there are many aspects to natal Chiron, it is also considered emphasized. However, everyone has Chiron in their chart for guidance on the quest for health and wholeness, even if it isn't considered prominent.

The role Chironic people play in the community is to show others how to deal with a particular kind of pain. Their job is to overcome the pain and elevate its resolution to a positive social example or vehicle for change. Imagine what a treasure this is to the rest of us, as we'd rather not to go through every drama in the book in order to become well rounded! We'll see some wonderful examples later.

Chiron-prominent people who are still learning the ropes, however, may serve to a fault, almost to the point of servitude. They may unconsciously create problems to fix, wounds to heal, or disputes to mediate. They may stay stuck in pain, preferring the reverence afforded the martyr to the glory of the hero. Heroism is the real potential of Chironic individuals who have the courage to act bravely both in their own story and as team teachers for their circle of friends and loved ones.



An especially Chironic expression I have heard is “When life gives you lemons, make lemonade.” Not only can Chironic people make great lemonade out of their own lemons, they can set up in business as lemonade stand owners, squeezing good juice out of other people’s lemons as well. They often excel at transmuting sour experiences into springboards of hope by changing how they look at them, then dealing with it. A good Chironic mantra is: Giving in to suffering is optional.

One person who has squeezed the last drop of lemonade out of tragedy is Candy Lightner, whose 13-year-old daughter died in 1980 in a hit-and-run drunk driving crash. Turning the rage into action, she and her friends formed MADD—Mothers Against Drunk Driving. Since then, alcohol-related traffic fatalities have declined 43 percent². Others are Francis and Carole Carrington, whose daughter, granddaughter, and family friend were brutally murdered near Yosemite National Park in 1999. They turned their grief into a memorial reward foundation with the goal of safely returning missing persons to their homes and securing the arrest and conviction of violent criminals. “The Carrington hope is to turn their tragedy into triumph for other families.”³

CHIRON: Modern Find, Big Question Mark

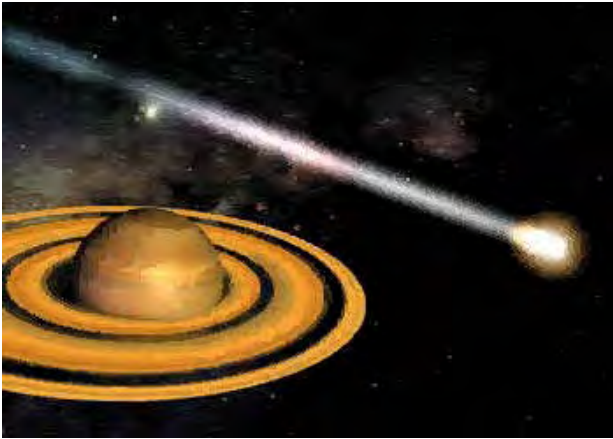
Before Chiron was discovered, humanistic astrologer Dane Rudhyar predicted that there would be a new planetary body found between Saturn and Uranus that would act like a “higher Moon.” Between Saturn and Uranus is exactly where Chiron was found—and the Chiron chapter in this book, between the Saturn and Uranus chapters, mirrors Chiron’s place in the cosmos. Chiron has a strong lunar quality, and like any good mom, Chiron mediates between Taskmaster Saturn and Rebel Uranus, attempting to make peace and balance in the family of inner forces within each of us.

The new kid on the block for astrologers, Chiron was discovered in 1977, and for the next 15 years, no one was sure just what to make of it. Orbiting erratically between Saturn,

² <http://www.madd.org/aboutus/1,1056,1686,00.html>.

³ <http://www.carolesundfoundation.com/>

the last visible planet, and Uranus, the first outer planet, Chiron resembles a comet in size and other physical features but acts like a small planet or asteroid.⁴



Charles Kowal, Chiron's discoverer, aptly named it after the mythical centaur, Chiron—half-man and half-horse—a composite being. The planetary object Chiron was ultimately recognized as the first of a completely new breed of planetary objects that astronomers call *centaurs*, in honor of the mythical Chiron. Astronomically, centaurs generally cross the orbits of the giant outer planets and are also known as *planet crossers*.⁵

That characteristic of crossing orbits is a key to understanding one of Chiron's major astrological functions as well, because the outer planets symbolize inner transformation and profound cultural shifts. Chironic individuals have an ear to the ground, sensing upcoming earthquakes of change. They can be invaluable to others by giving them a heads-up about the coming shift and helping them adjust to the coming change. The kind of change connected to Chiron is step-by-step—an organic process, unlike the radical change of Uranus. It implies acceptance and letting go a bit at a time with a degree of awareness, not denial. When we let go of something, we don't spring our hand open in quick release; we linger a bit, transitioning between past and present. Think of the last kiss between parting lovers. Chiron is the place between Then and Now.

Why did Chiron's discovery captivate so many modern astrologers? First, the discovery of a new planet is rare, the last three being Uranus in 1781, Neptune in 1846, and Pluto in 1930. (More recently, in 2004, the planetary object Sedna was discovered beyond Pluto, but astrologers have yet to discern its meaning in our charts.) Chiron and Pluto actually have a lot in common,⁶ including controversy about their classification. Nigel Henbest in *The Planets: Portraits of New Worlds* says we should regard Pluto not as the smallest of planets, but as "a comet to end all comets."

Aside from the fact that they have both been considered comets at one time, the discoveries of both Pluto and Chiron gave modern astrologers the unique opportunity to be part of determining their astrological meanings, rather than accepting what was passed down from earlier, even ancient, times. Planets don't come complete with meaning tags, like washing directions on tee shirts, when they first appear in an astronomer's telescope. Since most astronomers have an antipathy to astrologers, whose interpretations they consider unscientific, even if there were a meaning tag, they'd likely cut it out and never tell us about it.⁷

⁴ A **comet** is a relatively small astronomical object similar to an [asteroid](http://www.wordiq.com/definition/Comet) but composed largely of ice. See: <http://www.wordiq.com/definition/Comet>.

⁵ The Encyclopedia of Astrobiology, Astronomy, and Spaceflight: www.daviddarling.info/encyclopedia/C/Centaur.html.

⁶ *Chiron and Pluto: The Comet Brothers* by Joyce Mason: www.aplaceinspace.net/Pages/JMChironPluto.html

⁷ However, true to Chiron's form as a mediator between both sides of an issue, a small group of

This exercise in finding Chiron's meaning was best spelled out by the title of one of the earliest books about Chiron, *The Continuing Discovery of Chiron*, by the late Erminie Lantero. For nearly three decades, the discovery process has continued in exciting and often surprising ways. Chiron gave us a chance in our lifetime to take a journey into symbolism—to become modern-day Joseph Campbells on a quest for the meaning of life.

The second reason I believe astrologers had such a resonance with Chiron is that he is their patron saint. His mythical character was the first astrologer. He mentored heroes, just as all good astrologers hope to bring out the best in their clients. He was an ancient version of the Renaissance Man, exposing the young boys he trained to every kind of art—the martial arts, healing arts, music and other fine arts, and the finest art of all, sharing their talents. Every counseling astrologer aspires to emulate this archetype. What's not to like?



CHIRON's Glyph, Cosmic Characteristics, and Cultural Connections

There are three things astrologers look at when forming interpretations about a new planet: its astronomical properties; the mythical being after which it was named, which is somehow always magically correct; and the cultural changes occurring in or around the discovery date. To allow you to experience just a bit of the thrill of this process, we'll touch on each of the three.



Chiron's glyph or symbol is a key. It's not just any key...it's a skeleton key, the kind that opens all doors. Somewhere—either from the cosmic soup or out of what psychiatrist Carl Jung called the collective consciousness—a shorthand symbol was created for Chiron that captured its passkey nature. Understand Chiron in your chart, and you have unlocked the door between worlds, clicked and removed all barriers from the ridiculous to the sublime.

Unlocking it will help blend parts of yourself represented by very different astrological signs that are part of your birth chart and by the world of duality—yin and yang, light and dark, profound and profane.

Chiron and the other astronomical centaurs—over 40 of them have been discovered to date—are refugees from the Kuiper Disc. That disk is a flattened reservoir beyond Neptune where all short-period comets—that is, those with orbits of less than 200 years—are believed to have been born.⁸ Astrologer Mark Bailey from the University of Manchester believes that Chiron is the mother of all short-period comets.⁹ In other words, Chiron was once whole, and all other short-lived comets broke off from it. This theory speaks to Chiron's whole-making function. Like our spirits that were once whole in otherworldly realms, we are shattered when we fall to Earth and have to pull ourselves back together

astronomers worked with astrologers at the time of Chiron's discovery to share breaking information. See: <http://www.astro-horoscopes.com/HTML/AskKevin/980122.html>.

⁸ *Long period comets* have longer orbits but remain gravitationally bound to the Sun: <http://www.wordiq.com/definition/Comet>

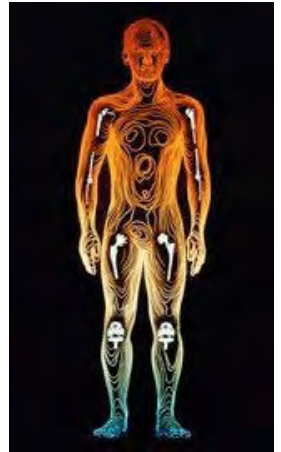
⁹ *The mother of all short period comets*, Discover, February 1991, p. 9.

again. The sense of Separation from the Divine is the one, universal Chironic wound.¹⁰ As we just live life, other wounds follow.

Throughout history, many cultures have viewed comets as omens. Chiron's discovery may point to the balance necessary to move humanity into an alternative lifestyle of holism that will support Earth and all life upon it in abundance.¹¹ Chiron's discovery coincides with a greater awareness of the healing needed in our planetary ecosystem. No surprise: Chiron is connected with ecology.

Going from the planetary to the personal, one of the most profound cultural shifts to occur near Chiron's discovery is the movement toward holistic healing and complementary medicine. In the years since 1977, ancient healing systems like acupuncture and Ayurveda have come to live side by side with antibiotics in many people's lives. Health care has slowly been moving away from a strict adherence to mainstream medicine, which is the relative newcomer at less than two centuries old, compared to millennia-old types of medicine deemed "alternative."

In the same time frame, women's rights were brought into the political and social mainstream, especially the right to choose, upheld in the Roe v. Wade decision in 1973. School bussing and other affirmative-action initiatives were also undertaken. Martin Scorsese, Francis Ford Coppola, and other directors made "their most aesthetically successful films" during the decade.¹² Prior male dominance was being balanced by the feminine in modern societies; barriers between black and white were turning gray; and art was beginning to thrive again.



CHIRON's Myth



Mythical Chiron was a misfit, neither man nor horse, but a half-breed with a hoof in both worlds. Yet he was unlike the other centaurs, which were renowned for drunkenness, raping, pillaging, and destroying the environment. He grew into a wise mentor of heroes like Jason, Hercules, and Aesclepius, the Father of Medicine. But it was wisdom for the pain, because Chiron has a history of

suffering like no other centaur. It appears his trials softened him--humanized him, if you will--helped him live more in his upper half or man-like nature versus his lower or animalistic half.

¹⁰ I am indebted to my dear friend and fellow astrologer, Gregg Castellucci, for this profound insight. Gregg was among a group of East Coast astrologers who studied Chiron extensively when it was first discovered.

¹¹ *Astrology Encyclopedia*, James R. Lewis, ed., Visible Ink (1994), "Chiron," by Joyce Mason and Dale O'Brien pp. 128-130.

¹² *Dazed and Confused: The 1970s and the Postmodern Turn* by Vince Carducci: <http://www.logosjournal.com/carducci.htm>

Abandoned by both parents and an embarrassment to his mother because he was a freak of nature, Chiron was left to fend for himself. In ancient Greece, the source of this myth, birth defective children were often left on a hillside to die. The God Apollo and the Goddess Artemis guided him in the guise of the Sun and Moon--a hint that we all need to look up for direction. In fact, as already mentioned, Chiron's position as the first astrologer illustrates the link between earth and sky that all of us must bridge to feel complete.

As Chiron communed with his Guiding Lights, he grew into a revered member of society who was known for turning unruly young boys into a few good men. In fact, he guided some of the most important leaders of the day. The key seemed to be a mix of practical survival skills, like archery and the martial arts, blended with the creative arts and healing skills--in other words, a well-rounded education.

Among the most moving parts of this complex myth is Chiron's accidental wounding at a wedding ceremony, inflicted by his most beloved student, Hercules. The wild centaurs had smelled the nuptial wine, a substance which always brought out the worst in them and lured them to the scene, where they created their usual pandemonium. As Chiron and his party sought to protect the women from being ravaged by the wild centaurs, in the fracas, a stray arrow shot by Hercules pierced Chiron's thigh.

Because he was the son of a god and a mortal sea nymph, Chiron was immortal, but he could feel physical suffering. His injury, likened to a lingering blood poisoning, continued as long as he lived, but he carried on in spite of it. Because of his own wounds, which he could not heal, and because he served as healer to so many others, the archetype of the Wounded Healer is one that astrologers often apply to the mythical Chiron and to individuals with Chiron prominent.

Ultimately, he made a deal to switch places with the tormented Prometheus, who was chained to a rock for stealing fire from the gods. As part of this life sentence, each night an eagle would peck out Prometheus' liver, and every morning it grew back to create a truly vicious cycle. Since Chiron was suffering himself anyway, he offered to change places with Prometheus. Impressed with his altruism, the gods released Chiron from his immortality and raised him to the heavens where he became part of our night sky as the constellation Centaurus.

Meanwhile, back in the 21st century, Chiron prominent people often feel like they don't fit in. They are likely to experience rejection by their parents and, like Chiron, to be forced back on their own resources to figure out how to deal with their pain. Rejection can take many forms, like the outright exile forced on the Dalai Lama, when Chinese communist forces threatened his life, forcing him to flee his beloved Tibet in 1959.¹³ Others with Chiron emphasized may have a physical disability of some sort, just as Chiron himself did. The fix? The mythical Chiron's prescription was to seek divine direction and become its channel. Chironic people often have a pivotal experience that connects them to Spirit, and this initiation changes the course of their lives.

Like Chiron, Chironic people soldier on despite sometimes agonizing pain. Chiron was rewarded with the love of his people and by seeing the important role he played in turning

¹³ His Holiness the Dalai Lama has Chiron at the focal point of a T-square involving Chiron, Neptune, and Saturn. Besides winning the Nobel Peace Prize, he'd win anyone's heart with his wonderful sense of humor.

out heroes who kept society safe from the likes of the wild centaurs. Chironic people make great teachers, mentors, and healers; Chiron was a surgeon and herbalist. Yet even with his best remedies, he couldn't heal himself.

CHIRONIC Characters Show Us How to Become Real Heroes

All is not lost for Chironic people when it comes to lingering pain. The resolution of Chiron's mythical story comes with his offer to be the scapegoat—to put his suffering to good use and give Prometheus a break. Here are some examples of modern-day heroes who have transmuted pain and taught us how to do it for ourselves:

Michael J. Fox. One of the most likable actors of his generation, Michael J. Fox has one of the more prominent placements of Chiron—in the first house closely opposing Pluto. His characters in *Family Ties* and *Back to the Future* are fondly memorable, as are his roles in the films *Greedy*, *The American President*, and the TV series, *Spin City*. After bearing the burden of Parkinson's disease silently for years, Fox went public with his diagnosis when he left *Spin City* in 2000 because of it. He continued to be a role model, turning his disease into a vehicle for change. He started the Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research, and maintains his sense of humor, considering the title of one of his fundraisers: "A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to Cure Parkinson's."¹⁴

Christopher Reeve. I am writing this a week after Chris's death, and today my local newspaper ran a cartoon with two panels¹⁵. The first was "Superman played by Christopher Reeve." The second, depicting Chris in his wheelchair, was captioned "Christopher Reeve played by Superman." He is the ultimate Chironic character, becoming a hero in whatever form presented itself to him. Natally, Chiron squares his close Sun/Mercury conjunction, and he not only far surpassed his expected healing curve when an equestrian accident left him quadriplegic, he went to bat for the cause of spinal chord injuries and stem cell research to cure it. He kept working; he kept hope. He believed to his dying day that he would walk again. Chiron has much to do with the can-do spirit, no matter what.



Caroline Kennedy Schlossberg. I have often wondered how Caroline Kennedy has managed, I hope forever, to avert the so-called "Kennedy Curse." (For those with more technical knowledge, Caroline has a close Chiron/Moon conjunction opposing Uranus and square Mars-- part of a *t-square*, a triangle of aspects considered quite potentially challenging). Not to mention the enormous personal losses she has

¹⁴ Askmen.com, *Michael J. Fox*:
http://www.askmen.com/men/entertainment_100/103b_michael_j_fox.html

¹⁵ The Sacramento Bee, October 23, 2004, Opinion, cartoon by Matt Handelsman, p. B6.

endured, a casual reading of her natal Chiron would suggest the pain of feeling different. Her overexposure to the public eye from childhood onward certainly had the potential to contribute to that fate. Who better to write a book called *The Right to Privacy?* Instead of staying stuck in a limelight without boundaries, she told us how to set them. This is a great example of Chiron's ability to transmute pain into a blessing.

Chironic people are humble, sharing their talents. Caroline's are considerable—lawyer, writer, Presidential daughter, wife of artist Edwin Schlossberg, and mom to their three children. An example of her ability to be a regular person, despite her famed pedigree, was buying eight “Arnold's the One” tee-shirts when her cousin-in-law, Arnold Schwarzenegger, was inaugurated governor of California¹⁶.

For Better or for Worse: WHOLENESS, Inner Marriage, and the CHIRON Sector

Astrologers typically decide that a planet “rules” a certain sign. Few planets have been more controversial than Chiron in this regard. Well-known astrologers have argued convincingly for both Virgo and Sagittarius rulership—Virgo because of the healer and stickler-for-routine, schoolteacher type it would take to turn out heroes. The latter, Sagittarius, has an archer centaur as its symbol, which certainly fits. Others felt that because Chiron's [perihelion](#) (its closest point to Earth in its orbit) is in Libra, the sign of balance and relationship, it might rule that sign—a key to its mediating, wholemaking function. Some even argued for a Scorpio rulership, because of Chiron's Christ-like death and rebirth story, including his sacrifice and how, after three days, he rose to the heavens.

But how can **wholeness** be just one thing? Along with many other astrologers, I believe that Chiron rules no sign in particular. Rather, I believe that all these theories are partially correct and that Chiron rules the Virgo through Sagittarius sector of the zodiac, which I call **the chiron sector**.¹⁷

You have already begun to learn about astrological signs, which refer to a person's nature. A later chapter discusses the astrological houses, which refer to a person's environment.¹⁸ You have already learned about the natural association between the 12 signs and 12 houses, starting with Aries/First, Taurus/Second Gemini/Third, and so on around the wheel of the zodiac. We'll focus on the particular third of the zodiac corresponding to the Chiron Sector.

¹⁶ *Sideshow a mix of glitz and curiosity*, Sacramento Bee, November 18, 2003 by J. Freedom du Lac, Bee Pop Culture Writer: <http://www.sacbee.com/content/politics/recall/story/7807708p-8748676c.html>

¹⁷ *Wholeness and the Inner Marriage: The Chiron Sector and Relationship* by Joyce Mason: <http://www.aplaceinspace.net/Pages/JMWWholeness.html>.

¹⁸ *Astrology Encyclopedia*, James R. Lewis, ed., Visible Ink (1994), “Natural House (Natural Chart; Natural Ruler),” p 388.



If we consider the zodiac symbol of the journey through life, in Virgo, we learn to be self-reliant through the independence we gain from supporting ourselves in the sixth house environment—work. The only way we can give ourselves fully in a partnership is to first explore our identity in ways like this. Virgo represents the inner marriage and the start on the path to wholeness. Outer Marriage follows in the relationship sign, Libra, and its seventh house arena, partnership. It is deepened in Scorpio, where sexual union and transformation do their magic in the eighth house of others' resources.

Once we have relationships down, we want to share our joy and know-how generously in Sagittarius in the areas of life represented by the ninth house such as philosophy, spiritual beliefs, and publications. (This is why there are so many self-help books written by people who have figured out how to make life work and want to “tell it to the world!”) We delight in contributing our talents and knowledge, now that we have arrived at a grounded, rounded life of plenty from the inside out.

After we master this process, there is hope that we will extend that peace and love to others we encounter in the last three houses of the zodiac, which correlate to the last three signs...Capricorn, Aquarius, and Pisces. Those houses deal with public life...career, organizations, and social welfare. The Chiron Sector—Virgo through Sagittarius—seems pivotal in the process of emotional maturation, where issues of Self and Other can be resolved so that we can take our place in the world—the transition from **me** and **you**, to **all of us**.

CHIRON Cycles and Life's Purpose

One of three major astrological life cycles is the Chiron Return—when Chiron has made a complete orbit around the Sun and goes home to the position it held at birth. The trio includes: the Saturn Return at approximately age 30; the Uranus Opposition at 40, and the Chiron Return approximately age 50. Chiron pioneer Barbara Hand Clow assigns these three cycles key words: physical crisis (Saturn), emotional crisis (Uranus) and consciousness crisis (Chiron).¹⁹ At the Saturn Return, we look to find the right forms and foundations for our lives, very tangible things, like where we live and who lives with us. At the Uranus Opposition, we want to break out of those forms because they have become too constricting. This is one of the astrological factors behind the midlife crisis. Finally, at the Chiron Return, we must complete the process of deciding how we relate to others, including the Divine.

In the course of its 50.7-year orbital period, however, Chiron also makes a series of

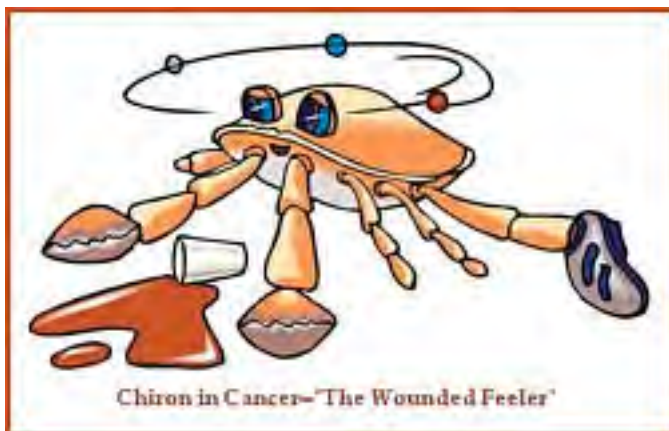


¹⁹ *Chiron: Rainbow Bridge Between the Inner and Outer Planets* by Barbara Hand Clow (1988: Llewellyn), p. 33.

major aspects to its own position in the natal chart, leading up to the Chiron Return²⁰. These aspects represent the process of deepening ensoulment, remembering that we are Spirit in physical form.²¹ The process starts with birth, where we are each born into the circumstances that catalyze our inner growth—physical, cultural, racial, religious, socio-economic, and psychological imprints. Whatever pain we encounter from this point forward can only be transcended with “the right spirit.”

At the first square, you begin to have an inkling or awareness of the Chironic wound and its impact on you. Chiron’s orbit is so erratic that this can happen anytime between the ages of 5½ and 23½²². At some level, this wound always has to do with feeling disconnected. Your specific wound, which Chiron’s sign and house placement in your chart can help you understand, will only trigger the existing birth trauma we all share, as mentioned before—feeling cut off from spirit. Chiron’s sign in your birth chart describes the qualities of your own personal pain of separation. Though we can’t cover all twelve Chiron signs here, let’s explore one example.

People with Chiron in Cancer include most of those born 1938-41 and 1988-91. Cancer is the sign naturally associated with mothering, so Chiron in Cancer’s wounds typically come from overprotectiveness, abuse, abandonment, or other inappropriate nurturing issues, usually connected with the mother. Mother is normally our literal lifeline



to survival and the initial source of our feeling life and human warmth.

Cancer is also among the most emotional of signs, being both Cardinal and water, and so, calling to mind the Wounded Healer archetype for Chiron, these are the Wounded Feelers. An example is the famous actress, Joan Crawford’s adoptive daughter, Christina, who wrote her account of an abusive childhood in the book, *Mommy Dearest*. Both Christina Crawford and Faye Dunaway, who played Joan Crawford in

the movie version of the story, have Chiron in Cancer.

²⁰ See the glossary and the chapter on aspects for descriptions of these aspects.

²¹ *Chiron and Life’s Purpose (Spirited Living)* by Joyce Mason:

www.aplaceinspace.net/Pages/JMOuters5.html. This article also suggests life’s purpose by Chiron sign.

²² Chiron’s orbit is so elliptical, it takes 8.25 years to go through the sign of Aries and 1.75 years to pass through the sign of Libra, its longest and shortest sojourns in the signs. Just like the wide variance of the first square between 5 and 23 years of age, Chiron’s opposition and second square to itself are too variable to predict without casting a chart with the assistance of an astrologer or astrological computing service.

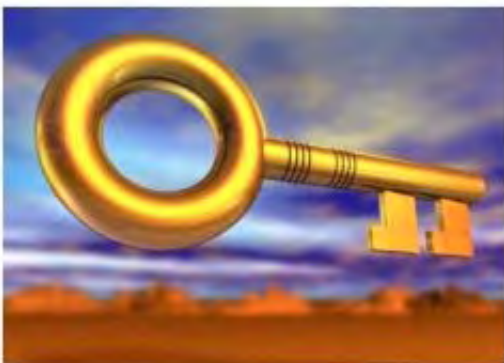
To find an astrologer that’s right for you, start with recommendations by friends who have been satisfied with the services they received from their astrologers. Other suggestions: Astrological referral services, such as Astrologer Directory: <http://www.stariq.com/Astrologer/AlphabeticalAstrologerDirectoryListing.asp> or use an astrology chart service to get your natal planetary positions. Astronumeric Service is a chart service that’s user-friendly for novices to astrology, including a toll-free order number and helpful phone staff: <http://www.astronumerics.com/>. Last but not least, many well-regarded astrologers write for, or advertise in, *The Mountain Astrologer* magazine: <http://www.mountainastrologer.com/>.

Events around the Chiron opposition often replicate the original wound in some form, piquing awareness of the mechanism that will nag, if not force you to grow. As this update to *An Astrological Guide to Self-Awareness* is being written, individuals with Chiron in Cancer (including most people born 1938-41 and 1988-91) are experiencing their Chiron opposition as Chiron transits Capricorn. (This is the second opposition for the older group, which had its first opposition sometime between 1951-1955).

During this transit, they are likely to be forced to face their wounded feelings—especially if they have been suppressed until now--and their mother's role in them. Some of the forms this could take are a health crisis in the mother that triggers past traumas, feeling a sudden need to resolve an estrangement from her, or being forced to face the issue by a sibling who has already done so. Teens with Chiron prominent in Cancer might face an unplanned pregnancy, an illness impacting future fertility, or being forced by circumstances to parent a sibling, all providing flashbacks to any nurturing deficits in their own childhood.

The next in this series of aspects, the second (or upper) square is when you begin to realize that you can reinterpret the pains you have suffered in life, especially if the earlier cycles have succeeded in nudging you to do your spiritual work. You may begin to reframe the areas of life impacted by the wounding. The Chironic wound hopefully starts to heal and becomes less knee-jerk. The person with self-esteem issues gains more courage after joining Toastmasters, an organization devoted to learning public speaking. People with disabilities no longer think of themselves as different or isolated, but as individuals with muscular dystrophy or hearing loss as part of their physical characteristics.

Lastly, at the Chiron Return around age 50, if you're doing your inner work, a more evolved way of viewing old wounds, physical or emotional, should have taken hold. You'll have the assurance that divine intervention is there for you whenever you need it. You'll have found your "holes"—what's missing in your life—so you can patch them up and experience wholeness and fulfillment. (Sometimes words are so literal!) If you've been working toward wholeness, your Chironic wound has become more of a sore spot than an open sore. It will always be there for biofeedback, like an old war injury, but by now, you know its purpose is truly divine.



Got it Now-- CHIRON's Purpose in Our Lives

Chiron's purpose is to help you be a hero—to help others—in your own way. In your wounding lies the golden key to your healing, and your Chironic wound often contains your special gift.

Famous examples have already been given in the lives of the Dalai Lama, Michael J. Fox, Christopher Reeve, and Caroline Kennedy.

Another is Patch Adams, M.D. before the movie of the same name brought him into the

public eye--the doctor with Chiron in Virgo on the Midheaven who has used humor to bring fun, friendship, and the joy of service back into health care since 1972²³. But you don't have to be famous to be a hero. It's every holistic practitioner who mixes the best of past and present healing techniques into the perfect blend for each individual. It's the Special Olympics athlete or the formerly battered wife who staffs a domestic violence shelter. It's the painfully shy individual who overcomes fear and becomes a speaker or actor in great demand.

By now, I hope you have a glimmer of why the continuing discovery of Chiron has been so exciting. Chiron—and everything it represents—leads us from wounded inertia to vitalized wholeness, from victim to hero in our own lives and in the lives of our fellow humans. That's a “whole” lot from a small astronomical body roughly the size of New Hampshire!

²³ To discover how to put more fun into your own healing efforts, visit Patch Adam's Gesundheit Institute at <http://www.patchadams.org/home.htm>.

URANUS AND THE DIFFERENT DRUMMER

How dull our lives would be without Uranus! It is the planetary force in our horoscopes that blasts us out of a rut when we are too apathetic or fearful to make a needed change. Astrologers say about Uranus transits that you should “expect the unexpected,” for you can almost count on unusual and unforeseen events. It is also the planet of individuality, the force that keeps us from being monotonous clones of one another. Like Saturn and Mars, Uranus has the reputation of being a *malefic*; no doubt this is because it is human to fear change and to suspect those who are different. As we will discover, however, Uranus is the much-needed urge within the human soul to keep moving forward to new and ever-higher levels of consciousness, rather than to stagnate. It is the planet of scientific discovery and of inventions. Without that part of our psyches, humanity would have remained in the Stone Age!

What We Can Learn from the Symbols for Uranus

The glyph for Uranus is rather different from the glyphs of other planets, and Uranus's placements in our chart do show our individual differences. The late astrologer Donald Bradley believed that Uranus has to do with the birth process, whereby we leave the womb and become separate individuals. Bradley felt the glyph for Uranus symbolized the birth process, for in stylized form it shows the infant, head down, passing through the birth canal. Uranus and Pluto are both connected with birth, but Pluto represents the reproductive process, in which something gradually grows within us. Uranus represents expelling that new life out of the safe, protective womb and into the world. As we grow spiritually, we leave less tangible wombs behind and become more and more individual. For example, astrologers associate divorce with Uranus, and divorce means that both parties now have to become individuals in their own right.



We can also see an upside down Venus in the Uranus symbol. Love and beauty are twin concerns of the planet Venus, and for Venus to be upside down is to experience these concerns from a vastly different perspective than the mainstream. [Uranian types](#)¹ do have a different idea of beauty than the rest of the world—look at modern art, computer graphics, or the cutting edge of fashion, all Venusian fields, yet dominated by Uranus-attuned people. Venus, like the seventh house of the horoscope, shows how we function in committed relationships, and many strongly Uranian individuals can't accept the traditional legalized monogamous heterosexual marriage as their only relationship option. In civilization as it is evolving, the entire concept of love may have to be turned upside down. The key to achieving the Aquarian/Uranian ideals of universal brotherhood and peace may be impersonal, unconditional love for all beings, rather than possessive, conditional, personal love.

¹ Uranus is strong when it is on the Ascendant, Midheaven, in aspect to the Sun or Moon or several planets, or if the sign Aquarius is prominent in the chart because the Sun, Moon, Ascendant or several planets fall into that sign.

Finally, the glyph for Uranus reminds me of a person doing a supported headstand—a yoga exercise that improves the flow of blood and oxygen to the brain and helps us become more clearheaded. Uranians strive to be clearheaded, but their perspectives sometimes seem upside down to the rest of us. We all have Uranus and Aquarius in our charts, however, so somewhere in our lives, our viewpoints are contrary to the established norms. For my ebook on the vocational implications of the outer planets, I did an AstroDataBank search for people with Uranus on the [Midheaven](#) (the tenth house cusp, the career point at the top of the chart².) Oddly enough, I found among the examples almost an even split of extreme left-wing and extreme right-wing individuals. Though their politics are vastly different—almost opposite from one another—they are alike in how extreme and different from the mainstream their ideas are.



Astronomers use a different symbol for Uranus, which is shown at the left, and most European astrologers have adopted it. I don't know why astronomers selected that particular glyph, but it appears to be a combination of the glyphs for the Sun and Mars. Mars, you will recall, has to do with directed energy, while the Sun represents the center of our being, so what would they mean if combined? It is true that only as we gain a sense of who we are can our energies be rightly directed, and that happens when we become individuals in our own right. Unbalanced Uranian types, however, can be *firebrands*, almost Mars-like in the extreme.

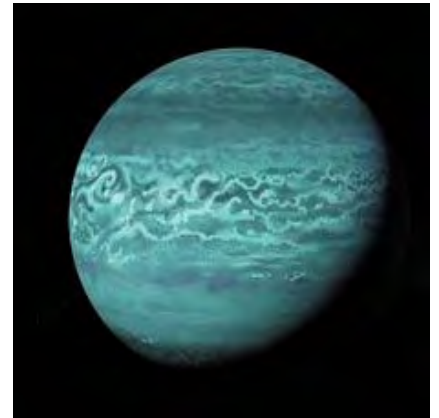
Unusual Properties of the Planet Uranus

Uranus's propensity for being different from the norm becomes more apparent when we consider the physical properties of the planet Uranus itself. The book *Astronomy Made Simple* points out four ways that Uranus is unique.³ All four seem to me to be related to the meanings of Uranus.

In the first place, Uranus is unique in that it was the first planet to be discovered with the aid of a telescope, since all of the inner planets plus Saturn are visible to the naked eye. This seems appropriate, as Uranus has to do with technology and the development of modern science.

Second, Uranus was discovered by accident while William Herschel, an amateur astronomer, was making other observations. It is fitting that Uranus was revealed first to an amateur rather than to the scientific establishment—astrologically, Uranus is an antiestablishment force in our lives.

Also discovered by accident, the rings of Uranus were one of the astronomical surprises of 1977. Uranus transits sometimes correlate with accidents, both accidents to the physical body and accidental discoveries in the creative process. Uranus is connected with space exploration, and the discovery of these rings, not visible in this photo, revived Voyager's exploration of the outer planets, which had been shelved. (There



² *The Outer Planets and Inner Life, Volume One: The Career Path of the Exceptional Soul* has a chapter on Uranus as a vocational indicator, as well as chapters on Neptune and Pluto as they apply to career. For more about the book, visit <http://www.moonmavenpublications.com>.

³ Meir Degani, *Astronomy Made Simple*, Doubleday 1966, p. 163.

must have been advances in telescopes at that point, for the asteroid Chiron, which falls between Uranus and Saturn, was also discovered that year.)

Third, Uranus rotates backward on its axis when compared with the rest of the planets⁴, and Uranian people often set themselves in opposition to the ordinary way of doing things—some, in fact, are downright contrary.

Fourth, Uranus is sideways, its equator forming almost a right angle to its orbit around the sun, the center of our being as well as the center of the solar system. The right angle in astrology is a *square*—a conflict aspect—and Uranians are perpetually in conflict with society. To have Uranus at right angles to its orbit around the Sun suggests both a positive and negative interpretation. In order to become true individuals, we must at some points be in conflict with the accepted path or *norm*, and we must also take a look at our own progress from different perspectives. On the other hand, if we perpetually engage in conflict for its own sake, as some adrenaline-addicted Uranians do, we lose our perspective and are no longer centered.

In these four ways, the planet Uranus is the rule-breaker of astronomy, and many Uranians believe that rules are made to be broken. They often feel they are so unique that rules don't apply to them. In another solar system, however, Uranus might be the rule rather than the exception—that is, in some solar systems, all planets might rotate "backwards" and "sideways." Likewise, what is considered odd or different about Uranians in one society may very well be the norm elsewhere.



The Process of Becoming an Individual

Let us return now to Donald Bradley's insight that the glyph for Uranus represents birth, with the accompanying trauma of separation from the womb but also with the freedom to become a separate individual. Psychoanalytic thinkers like Erik Erikson and Erich Fromm gave the name *individuation* to this recurrent process that happens at various stages and levels of our lives. Individuation is the process of becoming progressively an individual in our own right. Individuation is inevitable to some degree in every life, however involuntary it may be. Many of us are afraid to leave our personal wombs—including the safe but confining family circle, the secure but boring job, or the familiar but limited patterns of thought.

Fromm talked about this fear of striking out on our own as *fear of freedom* and related it not only to the problems of the individual but also to society's problems, like the rise at various points in human history of totalitarian regimes (e.g., Hitler's Germany and Saddam Hussein's Iraq). Oppression breeds revolution, however, and so such periods are often followed by revolutions, like the American and French revolutions that occurred just around the time Uranus was discovered in 1781.

Uranian people (and people under Uranus transits) have little choice but to strike out on their own—they are impelled to action by restlessness, a creative itch, and a discomfort with the *status quo*. They are pushed to greater and greater individuation, through increasingly ethereal but no less difficult birth canals. The greater the degree of individuation, however, the more starkly such people stand out against the conforming masses, and the more vulnerable they become to society's fear of people who are different. It is an achingly

⁴ For a great photo of Uranus' rings and tilted orbit, visit my favorite playpen on the web, the Astronomy Picture of the Day. Open your internet connection, and click on this link: <http://antwpr.gsfc.nasa.gov/apod/ap041118.html> Stay a while while you're at it—the archives are full of stunning astronomical photos.

lonely position. Fromm says that the higher the pinnacle of individuation we reach, the greater the corresponding urge to blend back into the safe and comforting crowd.

In-Groups: Teens, Rebels and Radicals

Given these conflicting urges—being an individual versus being part of the greater whole—the Uranian type can be in perpetual conflict with society and also in constant conflict with the self-protective shell of the self (Saturn). Since the loneliness and vulnerability of the Uranian type can be painful, one typical solution is forming an *in-group* with people who share the same ideals and concerns. We can observe the tendency to form in-groups in many kinds of Uranians—from teenagers, to creative people of various sorts, to active radicals, all the way to astrological associations. More extreme examples would be gangs of Goth street kids or computer hackers with their closed and secret chat rooms.

While these tightly-knit groups may actively oppose the conformity forced on us by society, an even more intimidating pressure to conform usually develops within the group itself. There is an escape from freedom into something that can be more confining than the society they rebelled against. In-group leaders are sometimes more dictatorial and arbitrary than any of the authorities they oppose. This blind obedience is rationalized as necessary to the success of the common cause.



If you were surprised to see teenagers included in the list above, remember that adolescence is a period of rebellion. Teenagers' clothing, speech, customs, music, and behavior are very different from what adult authorities expect or desire. Requests and demands from parents and teachers may be balked at simply because of the source. Going along with the crowd is important to the typical teen. If the current fad dictates that they wear their clothes inside out, that's what they will do. Teens who deviate from the ever-changing norm of the peer group are pressured to conform, and, if they can't or won't blend in, they are often cruelly ostracized.



Is living through adolescence just an unpleasant occupational hazard for teens and their parents, or does this period serve some constructive purpose? Fromm and Erikson felt it was a crucial phase of individuation in which young people free themselves from dependency on parents and begin learning how to function independently. Uranian transitions are likely to be extreme at first, until the new developments are firmly established, and then they may take on a milder form.

Thus, teens may have to rebel hard at first to establish freedom and independence. Many parents need this kind of shock in order to wake up to the fact that they are no longer dealing with a child.

Often, though, the need for rebellion comes from inside the teen rather than being imposed from outside—it is partly due to radical shifts in body chemistry as they become adults. The teen struggles against dependency needs and against the image of the parent lodged in their psyche. Unless this stage of development is successfully mastered, the result may be an overly dependent 40-year-old son or daughter who never left home. The more emphasized Uranus is in the birth chart, the stronger the period of adolescent rebellion may be. If it is any comfort to the parent or teen, charts such as these show tremendous creative potential or a particular role to play in righting the wrongs in our society. A soul of this type would need an unusual degree of freedom and independence to achieve its purpose in incarnating.

The question of what creates a rebel or radical is complex. Certainly a strong Uranus would be a predisposing factor, but we all have Uranus in our chart, and under the right circumstances, we could all be induced to rebel. While Pluto and Uranus were conjunct in Virgo (the sign of the common man) during the 1960s, women, students, blacks, and gay people felt sufficiently oppressed to start movements and revolts of their own⁵.

The career radical, however, has a strong Uranus (and often a strong Neptune). Perhaps these individuals do not start off rebellious, merely different. When their non-conformity results in oppression and ostracism, their behavior takes on a note of defiance, becoming more rigid. They can become radicalized partly in self-defense, standing up for their right to be different, and partly out of anger that society should try to force them into a mold that is not of their own making. Looking up the word **radical** in the dictionary, we find that its original meaning was "going to the roots, or fundamental." (Radical comes from *radix*, meaning *root*, and radicals often talk about "grass roots movements.") The word has subsequently taken on the meaning of favoring extreme changes or reforms. Radicals recommend getting at the very roots of problems, which would mean making some very fundamental changes in our society.



True radicals will generally band together in the sort of in-group discussed earlier. Forming an organized, structured group of Uranians, however, is almost impossible. They are individualistic to the core and can't accept the authority of a group of their peers any better than the authority of the establishment. Fierce in-fighting ultimately develops, and finally a faction will break off and form a *splinter group*. (How Uranian that term is!). The energy that could go toward the cause is often expended on infighting. The effectiveness of many political movements has been limited by the participants' inability to agree on a particular course of action for any sustained length of time.

⁵ People born during the 1960s were part of a generation characterized by that momentous Pluto-Uranus conjunction as part of their basic nature and life path. A chapter on the Pluto-Uranus generation appears in my ebook, *The Outer Planets and Inner Life, Volume Three: Exceptional Souls and Their Generations*. For more information, visit <http://www.moonmavenpublications.com>.

Uranus and the Field of Astrology

Uranus is the planet designated by the majority of astrologers as having to do their profession, and most astrologers seem to have both Uranus and Neptune strong in their charts. Needless to say, that makes some of them difficult individuals to deal with--eccentric, dogmatic, arrogant, contrary, and elitist! Trying to keep an astrology organization together and functioning harmoniously is like trying to get a union of anarchists to agree. Each astrologer has his or her own viewpoint, and rather than recognize that as a necessary and even desirable consequence of the Uranian nature, these folks insist that those who do not agree with them are "the enemy." Feuds are commonplace, and, as a result, astrology has more splinter groups than any political movement. There is even a faction of astrologers who call themselves Uranian. At first I thought the term a pure redundancy, but later found it applied to the particular techniques they use.

Popular astrology, dealing with Sun signs alone, is increasingly familiar to the masses. While many astrologers deride pop astrology as superficial, nonetheless it is a step forward. Our society has not been an introspective one, and Sun sign astrology can nurture the desire to look into and understand the self. The more introspective person will want to progress beyond the Sun sign level into the deeper levels of self-awareness an individual chart provides.



Astrology, being Uranian, carries all the danger of Uranian excess. Uranians are notoriously detached, and one danger is that we will use astrology and its technical jargon to detach ourselves from our emotions and the reality of things that happen to us. **We can also easily misuse astrology to detach ourselves from personal responsibility for the things that happen to us.** ("It was Mars that caused me to hit my wife, Judge.") Hopefully, we eventually learn to use that Uranian detachment in the more positive sense—embracing the astrology chart to gain a new perspective on ourselves and our problematic behavior and to help us discover our own individuality.

Astrology, a Uranian discipline, can help relieve our feeling of estrangement from humanity and yet at the same time affirm our individuality. We all contain all the planets and all twelve signs and houses, so we do have basic needs and emotions in common with everyone else; yet the particular combination of house and sign placements and aspects to planets is unique, and are we. When practiced by an astrologer who has some detachment about society's *shoulds* and *shouldn'ts* and who can view the chart in an unbiased way, astrology can help us see ourselves in a new perspective, free of society's judgements.



Genius and Eccentricity

I heard that someone once did a survey and found that there are more Aquarians in the Hall of Fame than any other sign. I also heard of a survey of a mental hospital that found more Aquarians there than any other sign. I can't swear to the truth of either story, but it smacks of that old saying about the fine line between genius and insanity.

Whether the Uranian type winds up in the Hall of Fame or the psych ward is often, once more, a matter of society and its definitions of our behavior. If Uranians, with their unusual perspectives, come up with insights, ideas, and discoveries that are useful, interesting, or entertaining to that particular culture in that particular era, society deems them geniuses. On the other hand, if the ideas are not ones that particular society is prepared to understand and use, then Uranians are defined as eccentric. Same individuals—different labels. When society changes, the definition of the Uranian individual may also change. These changes or fads in what is valued often correlate with the current zodiac sign of transiting Uranus, which changes signs about once in seven years. (Recent and upcoming signs for transiting Uranus include: Aquarius, 1995-2003; Pisces, 2003-11; and Aries: 2011-2118.)

It is said that prophets are without honor in their own country. Familiarity breeds contempt, and so those we grew up with tend to dismiss our abilities and ideas. Many brilliant, creative people have had to separate from their original birthplace in order to be appreciated and acclaimed. Likewise, many geniuses are ahead of their time—considered crackpots in their own era and not recognized until decades or even centuries later. Society imposes its pre-printed labels on us, and the labels are often wrong.

Like other Uranians, creative and brilliant individuals are often ostracized because they are different. For companionship and validation, they create their own in-groups—like writers' clubs, artists' collectives, and Mensa. So long as these groups foster and nurture the individuality of the artist, they are a great source of comfort, inspiration, and fellowship. However, if they match the pitfalls of other in-groups by dictating conformity of style, they can be counter-productive.

We have talked as though genius and creativity were the property of the elite, but astrology shows the fallacy of that line of thought. Uranus has to do with genius, and we all have Uranus and Aquarius somewhere in our charts, so we all have our own particular brand of genius. By insisting on conformity, society stifles creativity and also defines genius along very narrow lines—the fine arts, academia, and science. If someone's gifts don't fit into those categories, we may not recognize it. A thorough understanding of your chart can help you to tap into your personal genius.

Uranus and Groups

In discussing the Uranian type, it keeps sounding like I'm talking about "they" and "them" instead of you and me. This shows how deeply we are conditioned to view people in terms of in-groups and out-groups and how far we are from the Aquarian ideal of universal love and equality. There is no such thing as an average person and no such thing as normal. These are illusions based on statistics and on our tendency to hide anything within ourselves that seems different. We all have Uranus and Aquarius somewhere in our charts, and so we all have our quirks.



Strangely enough, when we participate in group experiences like self-help groups and self-improvement workshops, we find that these seeming quirks are not strange after all,

but shared by many people. It is only because of social pressure that most people do not freely speak of these ways they are different. Perhaps groups are considered Uranian or Aquarian because such experiences, detached from our daily lives, raise our consciousness and give us a sense of unity with others. We are then faced with a paradox...and what could be more Uranian than a paradox? On the one hand, it is often in groups that we can see our own particular uniqueness shine through, by its contrast with other people. Yet, it is also in groups that we can feel the bond of common humanity we share with all people. Both astrology and group experiences are Uranian and, when used in a balanced way, both can bring about a healing of the Uranian problems of feeling isolated and ostracized because of our differences. For the Uranian sense of being too different from our peers, we can turn to the Uranian (and eleventh house) remedy of joining a group of like-minded people.

Accidents and Breaks under Uranus Transits

Under certain Uranus transits, say Uranus to Mars, Saturn, or the Ascendant, the astrologer will generally warn against accidents. This is not the only possibility, but certainly you would be wise to be cautious during such a transit. Perhaps we should take a look at accidents and how they come about. My Science of Mind teacher, Eric Pace, once linked accidents and rebellion without knowing that Uranus rules both. The person who has an accident is usually rebelling against safety rules, and many Uranians are accident-prone. Uranians believe that rules are made to be broken—but unfortunately, so are arms, legs, and ankles.

At a deeper level, however, if we studied accidents more closely, I think we'd find that most self-caused accidents come about during flare-ups of rebellious feelings. During a field trip with a writing class, I had two potentially serious accidents in the space of an hour. I knew exactly what was going through my mind each time, because we were instructed to observe our feelings and thoughts while doing certain tasks. Each time, the accident immediately followed a flare-up of rebelliousness at having to follow instructions. You may want to observe yourself after even a minor accident—try to reconstruct what you were thinking about immediately before.

After many serious accidents, however, people suffer a curious amnesia and can't remember what happened. This is attributed to "shock" (a Uranian word), and that may be partially true. Amnesia and forgetting, however, can also have a large component of repression—that is, shoving unacceptable wishes and emotions into the unconscious. What could be unacceptable about a self-caused accident, except the motivation behind it? At the unconscious level, there are no accidents—many devastating accidents are unconsciously carefully arranged. The motive may be a rebellious one ("I will subvert their demands by hurting myself"), a self-destructive one, or even a desperate attempt to escape some situation. Nonetheless, there is a motivation behind the accidents we cause



ourselves.

The physical consequences of accidents are undesirable, but if contemplating the accident leads the person to new understanding of what she or he is rebelling against, it can lead to positive change. For example, one of my friends was living in a communal farm arrangement that she had become very unhappy about, but she could see no way out. For her, the way out took the form of breaking her leg—twice. After the second break, her parents came and took her home, she went into therapy, and ultimately went to school to become a chiropractor. The two accidents were a turning point in her life, even though the pain and suffering were considerable. However, had she known herself well enough to break away from a situation that stifled her individuality, an accident in which she broke her leg would not have been necessary.

Uranus seems connected with breaks. (Saturn, on the other hand, is *brakes*.) Under Uranus transits couples may "break up." Some people have "break downs"—which are not always mentally unhealthy when they cause us to "break away" from or change situations that are destructive. Teenagers "break out" in pimples—all skin conditions metaphysically represent an identity problem—and Uranus has to do with the search for one's individuality. Not all breaks are negative. When creative "accidents" and discoveries occur, we call it a "break through" or a "lucky break." If you do have an accident under a Uranus transit, it should be a signal that your unconscious is asking you to break away from something that is stifling your individuality and causing you to rebel. Give yourself a break and analyze what that situation is.

The Uranus Transit— Lightning Bolt or Earthquake?



I have often heard a Uranus transit described as "a bolt out of the blue"—a completely unexpected event that strikes like lightning. When you look more deeply, however, a great deal was going on under the surface long before the event. To go back to Donald Bradley's metaphor about Uranus and the birth process—that baby didn't just appear out of the blue; it was growing in the womb for nine months. Likewise, most surprising events that appear to come out of the blue under Uranus transits are not totally spontaneous but are the result of some inner mental, emotional, and spiritual process that has been going on for a considerable time.

For that reason, I don't agree that Uranus transits are like a bolt of lightning; they are more like an earthquake or volcanic eruption. Earthquakes can seem like a bolt out of the blue, but studying the process leading up to one can teach us a great deal about Uranus. Deep under the surface of the earth, there are long jagged cracks in the rock layers called *faults*. (Significantly, they can be shaped like the glyph for Aquarius. If the edges of the plate are poorly aligned, tension and pressure build up along the fault until it suddenly gives and creates an earthquake. Then there is a series of *after-shocks* as various parts of the fault realign themselves and settle into place.

Uranus transits may operate in a similar manner. A split or schism can develop

underground in your life that would be similar to a fault. Perhaps your marriage is stifling your individuality, and you begin to want your freedom. Pressure continues to build up, until a Uranus transit signals a separation or the need for marital counseling to work out innovative (Uranian) approaches to the relationship that make more freedom and individuality possible for both. In this example, the "after-shocks" are the adjustments you and your spouse have to make afterwards.



The notion of pressure along a fault is a metaphor that can account for the unexpected or unpredictable behavior people exhibit with a Uranus transit. People who suddenly leave a successful career to go live in the mountains have probably yearned for years to break away from the pressure of that kind of work. Sudden eruptions of violence are occasionally seen under Uranus transits, for instance to Mars. These events do not strike out of the blue, but are the unleashing of years of stored up anger and frustration. In a less drastic example, an argument may help clear away the tension between two people—and periodic fights, if pursued in a healthy way that preserves the relationship, can keep a more serious rift from occurring.

Are earthquakes like these necessary in our lives? No, if you don't allow that much pressure to build up along the fault. A geological fault that is not earthquake-prone is one with a good deal of "slippage"—that is, flexibility and freedom of movement. The life lesson we can learn from this geological fact is not to repress your individuality and your need for some freedom to the point of self-destruction. The more rigidly you adhere to a set of social rules that try to force you to be what you aren't, the more pressure will build up along the fault—and the bigger that earthquake will have to be to put your life back into proper alignment.

Uranus and Crisis

Shock is a Uranian word. Electricity shocks us if we are not properly grounded—and we also behave in shocking ways when we are not grounded, i.e., centered. Sometimes we need a great shock in our lives in order to jolt us out of inertia. Donald Bradley said that Uranus is the planet of progress through shock, startling us out of complacency.

Some people seem to need to create crisis. Not only is it exciting (Uranus' energies are electric), but often a crisis is the only way we know to get moving. This all-too-human trait is partly due to inertia and resistance to change--sometimes we need that heightened emotion and awareness to motivate us.

Uranian types, however, can sometimes be addicted to excitement and crisis for the sheer adrenaline rush. They bore easily and may act provocatively in order to get a rise out of those around them. When carried to an extreme—often the case when natal Uranus is strong and makes many difficult aspects—the more volatile Uranians might even be called loose cannons.

Creating a crisis can also be a response to social pressure against change—people around us usually don't like the *status quo* disturbed and will pressure us not to rock the boat. As a result, we often unconsciously create a crisis that will be deemed sufficient cause for the desired change. For



instance, married people who have a good home and family but just don't love their spouse any more will have a hard time breaking away unless some dramatic event occurs (e.g., by getting caught cheating, or by an incident of domestic violence). Or you may have a secure, lucrative job that bores you to tears. If you quit for something insecure and less lucrative but more exciting, others demand an explanation—"Why did you do that? You had a perfectly good job." Getting fired solves the problem—it appears not to be your own choice.

Because there are powerful pressures on all of us to conform and to repress our self-expression and individuality, we may feel that we have to have a reason or excuse to break away from situations that keep us from being ourselves. A Uranus transit often accompanies the kind of crisis that gives us permission to make the change we've been wanting but didn't have the courage to make. The drawback is, change and crisis imposed from the outside can be painful and destructive. Why break a leg—why not just break away? Or take a break, now and then?

The courage to be who you are can arise from expressing Uranus well. Finding constructive ways of expressing your uniqueness regularly will make more destructive eruptions unlikely. The corporate executive who is a weekend biker is one example, as is the middle class wife and mother who flies away to an astrology conference a couple of times a year to be with people who share her symbolic language. Analyzing Uranus's sign, house, and aspects in your birth chart can teach you much about how to express your uniqueness in exciting, creative, and constructive ways. If you aren't that far along in your studies, a session with an astrologer can put you in touch with this facet of yourself.

LIVING WITH NEPTUNE -THE TIDE CAN'T ALWAYS BE IN



It is remarkable how often current circumstances and moods mirror the planet I am writing or teaching about. Classes on Mercury or Gemini are full of sidetracks, jokes, and lively discussions, while classes on Saturn are dead serious and even faintly depressing. Never has this principle been so true as in writing this chapter on Neptune, which has taken NINE months. (In numerology, 9 represents Neptune.) Neptune is hazy and mysterious; the folder containing my material on Neptune has twice vanished completely for months at a time. In true Neptunian fashion, I took that as an omen that I wasn't meant to write the chapter yet. Neptune is nebulous and resists structure, and another reason this chapter took so long is because I hadn't a clue about how to structure it, though I usually have no trouble organizing my writing.

It's not surprising that many of us find ourselves at sea on this topic—Neptune was the god of the sea, and the planet Neptune has powerful connections with the ocean. Fish are a symbol for Pisces, which Neptune rules, and also for Christianity, a major religious development of the Piscean Age.

The primeval force of the ocean holds a special fascination for Neptunian people, soothing and calming them¹. High tides and low ebbs mark the rhythm of our lives, but the Neptunian can spend a lifetime—or several—learning to accept the reality that the tide can't always be in. During low ebbs, Neptunians may seek addictive substances (another form of Neptune) to get them "high" again, but if they rely too much on these artificial means, they can get "hooked"...start drinking like a fish, for instance.



The Material Plane vs. the Astral Plane

A sound footing in reality is necessary in order to deal with life on the material plane. Surely we wouldn't be here if there weren't valuable lessons for us to learn from it. The Neptunian, however, often wants to cut loose the moorings of this plane to drift and dream. This is true of the addictive personality, it is true of the schizophrenic, and it is true of the psychic or mystic as well. These three types, I maintain, are really one—all intensely Neptunian, but with differences in what they are "hooked" on.

The proof of this is in how frequently the addictive type shifts from one expression of Neptune to another. Many psychics drink heavily or smoke pot to enhance their perceptions. Alcoholics may get sober by joining A. A., which is a deeply spiritual path to recovery, and many drug addicts have been cured by conversion to Christianity. A study financed by the National Institute of Drug Abuse showed that nearly half of all heroin addicts also are alcoholics or

¹ Neptunians include those with Pisces or the twelfth house strongly emphasized in their birth charts due to the presence in that sign or house of the Sun, Moon, or several planets. They also include people with Neptune aspecting the Sun, Moon, Ascendant, Midheaven or several planets.

have severe drinking problems.²

Then there is the tie between delusion and spiritual seeking, two extreme ends of the Neptune's spectrum of expressions. A number of psychiatrists have noted how uncannily psychic their patients are, and religious delusions are common among psychotics. In certain groups, such as the Puerto Rican spiritualist churches, folks that you and I might regard as crazy are looked on as possessed by spirits and revered as messengers of God. Does it make you uncomfortable to tie crazies, drunks, and junkies together with "spiritually enlightened" people like you and me? Like it or not, Neptune is a strong factor in all these paths. We've all got Neptune in our charts, and there, but for the grace of God, go you and I. The battle is not won once for all time, either, because to maintain sound mental health when engaged in spiritual pursuits, you must constantly strive to deal with Neptune's energy in a balanced way.

What is the common thread between these seemingly different groups? I believe it is an unusually strong attachment to what is known as *the astral plane*, the dimension we all visit nightly in dreams and where we return after death. For those who aren't consciously familiar with it, the astral plane is a non-material state of existence where our thoughts and emotions immediately assume a semblance of reality. When we dream that we are flying, for instance, we may actually be having out-of-body experiences (i.e., astral traveling). The astral plane lacks the boundaries of time and space that govern the material plane, so psychic people are often able, through astral travel, to move forward or backward in time or space. It is more accurate to call these people *psychically awakened*—all of us have psychic ability, though for many, it is latent. Any strong physical or emotional stress, such as a brush with death or impending danger may put us in contact with that plane.

Both psychics and schizophrenics may sometimes be operating on the astral plane, but psychics have some ability to do so at will, while schizophrenics have no choice in the matter and may at some points be snagged there, like bad dreams they cannot escape. This plane also plays a part in the addictions. Certainly the "trips" of a person on LSD as well as the hallucinations of an alcoholic in D.T.'s must be based in the astral plane. Many native cultures are aware of plants like peyote or jimson weed that induce visions, and vision quests are often part of initiations and ceremonies for tribe members. (Most such plants are highly poisonous, so shamans supervise their administration very carefully.

Even though we visit the astral realm in dreams, to do so in waking life is fearsome to most newcomers on the spiritual path, perhaps due to difficulty in achieving conscious control. This fear serves to keep us from attempting psychic feats or astral travel while we are not sufficiently mature to deal with them. It may be that many bad psychic experiences are given to us for the purpose of warning us off until we are ready for them.



² This study, done at the Eagleville, PA Hospital and Rehabilitation Center, was reported in the National Enquirer on 1/25/77, p. 34.

Spiritual maturity is needed to deal with psychic experiences in a responsible manner and to control the emotions, fears, and urges that arise.

Too many people misuse psychic gifts to enhance their ego or to give them power over others. In doing so, their psychic abilities often become unreliable, so they are tempted to boost them by fraudulent means. Many mediums or channelers who were perfectly genuine in the beginning wind up as frauds when their egos become too involved. The ego of the negative Neptunian psychic, astrologer, spiritual seeker, or "guru" is often boundless. To be one with God is, of course, the ultimate aim of all spiritual pursuits, but the Neptunian on an ego trip believes he is one with God in some special way... like being an avatar or savior.

So many Neptunians have made me party to this, their most precious innermost secret, that I am now ready to propose a principle to you: SHOW ME A NEPTUNIAN WHO DOESN'T SECRETLY BELIEVE HE'S THE SAVIOR, AND I'LL SHOW YOU A NEPTUNIAN WHO'S LYING!! (Naturally, now that I've gotten so enlightened, I no longer believe I'm *that* important, but I do cherish a persistent and admittedly bizarre notion that I can achieve perfection in this lifetime and not have to incarnate any more.) Doctors, another group of Neptunians, also like to regard themselves as God-like. Significantly, doctors have the highest rate of alcoholism of any profession, perhaps because they are constantly exposed to ego-deflating reminders that they are really only human. Why should the ego pose such a trap for Neptunians? Astrologers of the Jungian type designate Neptune as our tie to the collective consciousness, which is our unity with everything that is. Only by forgetting our separateness momentarily can we experience that unity and be one with God.

Note that with Uranus, which orbits just one planet closer to the Sun than Neptune, the urge was to discover our individuality. Perhaps only after we have completed that task can we fully realize the seemingly opposite (Neptunian) task of experiencing our unity with All That Is. Certain recent generations were born with Uranus and Neptune in aspect to one another— the Uranus-Neptune trine that was within a five degree range during parts of 1937-45, the square that was within a five degree range during parts of 1952-8, and the Uranus-Neptune conjunction between 1988 and 1998. Those three crucial generations, inhabiting the earth in the same time frame, may be explorers into the frontiers of successfully blending these two planetary energies³.



The ecstatic Neptunian experience of oneness, of merging with something greater than ourselves, is the real high. To focus attention on the ego is to lose not only the high but also to lose touch with the collective consciousness through which psychic and spiritual connections work. Drug and alcohol users try to create that high artificially—either not knowing or not accepting that it is the transcendence of self through a spiritual experience that they are seeking.

³ Sub-generations like these are the subject of my ebook, *The Outer Planets and Inner Life: Volume Three—Exceptional Souls and their Generations*. It devotes two chapters to the Uranus-Neptune groups. For more about the book, visit <http://www.moonmavenpublications.com>.

The forerunner of communism, Karl Marx said that religion was the opiate of the masses. In an era when the masses no longer find much solace or substance in traditional religion, more and more people are trying to achieve that high by opiates and other artificial means, including compulsive shopping or exercising for hours. This point was clearly stressed by former Senator Harold Hughes of Iowa, who was an alcoholic before entering politics and eventually left politics to become a lay minister. Asked to account for the rise of alcoholism and drug addiction in our country, he said it was due to a widespread feeling of *spiritual emptiness*. For people with a strong emphasis on Neptune in their charts, our society's atmosphere of spiritual emptiness can be the most devastating. Such people must put extra effort into the search for meaning in life; the alternative is negative escapism.

If they succeed in their task, Neptunians can become effective spiritual teachers, helping to lead people away from negative Neptunian pursuits and revitalizing people's faith in a spirituality deeper than the material plane we're most familiar with. If you've struggled with addictions in your lifetime, it's not at all kind--OR productive--to beat yourself up for what might appear to be lost years. Neptune is the planet connected with both addiction and spiritual growth. Consider that you have been fully occupied with the lessons of Neptune, most of which don't fit on a resume but which are quite serviceable on a karmic and spiritual level.

The Problem with Panaceas

Side effects seem to be a peculiarly Neptunian phenomenon. Rest assured that any trumpeted *panacea* (cure-all)—from the newest medication to the latest idea in social reform—is bound to have unexpected side effects. Today's miracle drug is often tomorrow's headache. In our eagerness to find a solution for some ill, we deceive ourselves about the true nature of the remedy. We lunge at it, like a drowning swimmer at a piece of board, only to find it's really a shark's fin.

To seek a panacea to a problem is to leave ourselves open to self-deception and to side effects. This principle has been demonstrated repeatedly. Due to the principle of the survival of the fittest, a stronger remedy often escalates the problem. We are continually developing stronger and stronger antibiotics that only result in stronger and more resistant strains of viruses. Increasingly stronger pesticides are only creating better cockroaches and the super-rat. Similarly, with addictions, more potent doses of the substance are required as the body develops tolerance for the substance.

The history of addictive drugs follows a similar pattern. Opium was widely hailed as a panacea and used in all kinds of patent medicines in the 1800s, before people became aware of its addictive properties. Morphine and heroin, derivations of opium, also deceived the public at first about their addictive side effects. When heroin addiction became a major social problem, yet another opium derivative, methadone, was celebrated as a treatment. It turned out that methadone addiction is far more devastating to the body than heroin. When methadone programs do not include recovery groups and counseling, they are essentially a form of social control to keep addicts from engaging in criminal acts. Neptune has an affinity to oppressed people, and in historic times, Caucasians deliberately used alcohol to control Native Americans and African slaves. Even today, these two ethnic groups struggle mightily with addiction, the sad heritage of that

deliberate chemical sabotage.

Addiction itself is a side effect of the desire to escape problems and painful emotions. Alcohol combines a sedative and an irritant.⁴ The kicker is that the sedative effect of one shot lasts only two hours, while its irritating effect on the body lasts 12 hours. Two shots sedate the body for four hours, but irritate it for 24. Alcohol suppresses anxiety and other unpleasant emotions while you are intoxicated, but by a rebound effect, the anxiety level becomes even more pronounced when the alcohol wears off. Thus the alcohol abuser continues to drink to stave off unpleasant emotions and physical effects. Tolerance builds up over time, and full-fledged addiction can eventually ensue.

Those who are addicted to alcohol and other substances use the Neptunian defense mechanism of **denial** to convince themselves and others that addiction is not occurring. Another ocean metaphor my Piscean friend Rod Chase uses is "beware of the undertow" that alcohol and other such substances have when we let ourselves be hooked.



In general, the side effect of escaping your problems is that they get worse. This would be like a garden that has gotten weedy. You decide you just "can't face it," so you leave it alone for a week or two. The weeds don't go away; they grow rapidly, getting harder and harder to eradicate. They develop stickers, tendrils, rough leaves, massive roots, and tough, woody stalks so that they're really hard to pull. Soon they start taking some of your good plants along with them. If you had pulled them when they were young and tender, it would have been much easier... routine drudgery, to be sure, but easier in the long run. You have to pull a weed up whole, including all the roots, or it will grow back from whatever small pieces are left behind. The big problems we face in life require as much cultivation as a garden.

Should all panaceas be suspected of having negative side effects? Yes, until proven otherwise. Alcohol appears to mask your troubles, and the disease of alcoholism can take many years to develop. Damaging side effects of some prescription medicines in use for 20 years or more are only now being recognized. Likewise, some of the seemingly "spiritual" teachers we so blindly follow can fool themselves and us—only a long period of observation and testing can prove their merit. We should never accept any idea without thinking it through for ourselves. Over-dependence on any chemical substance can lead to physical and emotional imbalance, and similarly slavish devotion to a human teacher can be a Neptunian trip leading to mental and spiritual imbalance.

Neptune—a Higher Expression of Venus?

So far we've focused on the negative sides of Neptune, and it seems true that there's more quicksand along the path of Neptune than any other planet in the chart. Neptune represents the best and the



⁴ This and other material on alcoholism was derived from an excellent course given by the Bedford-Stuyvesant Alcohol Treatment Center in Brooklyn.

worst in us—the saint and the scoundrel. But what is the constructive side of Neptune? Traditionally, Neptune is considered the *higher octave* of Venus, meaning that Neptune is what Venus would be if carried to its highest possible usage. Additionally, as we discussed in an earlier chapter, Venus is supposedly exalted in Pisces, the sign Neptune rules.

Venus represents personal love and relatedness, and Neptune carries love to a spiritual level—selfless and unconditional love, not asking anything in return. It is selfless in that the boundaries of self are dissolved, and we are once more in the collective consciousness



where everything is one. In such a state of psychic attunement, your pain is mine, so identification, compassion, and empathy are the natural results. Bill Clinton has Venus and Neptune conjunct his Ascendant, and when he meets people who have suffered tragedies or hardships, he often says, "I feel your pain." I believe that he does feel it, for Neptunians are highly empathic; yet Clinton's fatal flaw as president was his lack of boundaries in sexual encounters. Many Neptunians have serious boundary problems.

Balance is again the big challenge. It is hard to partake of another's pain without becoming enmeshed in it—being dragged so deeply into the problem that you lose perspective and can't help. This is tricky—you have to be separate enough to be objective, yet the Neptunian state negates separateness. The Golden Rule says, "Do unto others as you'd have them do unto you," but if you are over-identified with another person, you often act unwisely, confusing the issue for them and for yourself.

Altruism and compassion are traits of Neptunians and are perhaps logical extensions of Venusian sharing and consideration for others. A Neptunian, Piscean, or twelfth house dedication to serving the ill and unfortunate can contain a considerable degree of altruism, but as a motivation altruism is over-rated. We gain and learn a great deal from the things we do for others—I'd go so far as to say we generally get more than we give in



such exchanges. Giving also makes you feel good—a great boost to the ego. There's a heavy streak of egotism in many seemingly selfless people among us, even if it masquerades behind a "humbler than thou" facade.

Harmony is attributed to Venus, and music to Neptune. There is no doubt music has a powerful emotional impact. I feel it is one of the ways we become connected with the astral plane, particularly through hymns and chants. I once heard a beautiful quote from the Zohar—"There are halls in the heavens above that open but to the voice of

song."⁵ If this is true, why do so many jazz and rock and roll musicians become addicted to drugs or alcohol? It is again a shift from one Neptunian hook to another. Music may induce a spiritual yearning in them, but they fail to recognize it as such and turn to chemical pathways to that high-producing unity with all. A phrase once popular among musicians seemed to express this cosmic connection. When they were feeling particularly good, they would say, "Everything is everything."

The good side of Neptune, then, is a vastly improved version of the more personally concerned Venus. One quality Neptune lacks that belongs to Venus and its sign Libra is the principle of *balance*. Neptunians are particularly prone to imbalance—mental, emotional, and spiritual. Until a sufficient amount of emotional and mental balance is developed, Neptune is not likely to be an unmixed influence in our lives. Under the right circumstances, anyone can slide so easily from the positive side of Neptune to the negative that it is wise to keep in mind that old poem:

there's so much good in the worst of us,
and so much bad in the best of us,
that it ill behooves any of us
to pass judgment on the rest of us.

NEPTUNE TRANSITS— WHY ME, LORD?

It's hard to see Neptune as a positive force in our lives because too often Neptune transits feel anything but positive while they are in process. We are frequently in a fog, confused and deceived by ourselves and others. We are prone to delusions, excesses and even breaks with reality. We can feel listless, powerless, apathetic, depressed, and almost inevitably sorry for ourselves. Time and money disappear, we know not where⁶. Any dysfunction that Neptune represents in the birth chart are likely to reach a critical point under Neptune transits—they typically reach a critical point, become intolerable, and are finally dissolved. The best solvents for these dysfunctions are surrender, prayer, forgiveness, and letting go.

Many astrologers think that Neptune teaches only by negative example—i.e., that we must learn to control or avoid the various tendencies described in this chapter. I think,

⁵ According to an Internet source, "The Zohar [radiance] is the greatest classic of Jewish mysticism. It is a mystical commentary on the Torah, written in Aramaic, and is purported to be the teachings of the 2nd century Palestinian Rabbi Shimon Ben Yohai. Legend relates that during a time of Roman persecution, Rabbi Shimon hid in a cave for 13 years, studying Torah with his son. During this time he is said to have been inspired by God to write the Zohar." For more detail, visit <http://www.faqs.org/faqs/judaism/FAQ/03-Torah-Halacha/section-34.html>

⁶ Parts of this material on Neptune transits appeared in two articles: a. "Get Help from the Outer Planets If You're Facing Big Changes in Your Life," *Your Personal Astrology*, 7/74, and b. "A Spiritual-Psychological Approach to Transits," *Dell Horoscope*, 9-10/75.

however, that these difficulties are only failed attempts in our quest to reach through to the positive side of Neptune. What, then, is the purpose of Neptune in our lives? What is the lesson it can teach us?



One day as I sat seeking answers to these questions, the radio began playing "The Impossible Dream." Yes, one of the functions of Neptune is to raise our sights, inspire us, and help us dare to dream. Martin Luther King—who had the Moon in Neptune-ruled Pisces—inspired millions with his speech, "I Have a Dream." We are often quite inspired under Neptune's influence, even if we lack the determination and clarity of vision to carry out our visions until the transit is over. Still, without the inspiration of great dreams, our world would never change. I once saw a quote by Ida Lupino on a plaque that demonstrates this function clearly. She said, "All of us are standing in the mud, but some of us are reaching for the stars."

Many negative manifestations of Neptune arise from one universal urge or need—to transcend the bonds of self and merge with something greater. Some of the ways we attempt to do this are positive and creative, leading us to greater spiritual development, while others create more of the very problems we are trying to escape. If the negative fork on the road is taken during a Neptune transit, at the very least people learn that what they have not chosen the right way. We cannot and should not judge others' spiritual progress or karma from their outward behavior. The drug addict could be learning the lessons of Neptune with a depth it might take another person many lifetimes to learn.

Feelings of disillusionment are common under Neptune transits, and as depressing as this can be, it is often an important step in our development. When it is time for us to leave something behind, no matter how good it may have been for us formerly, we become disillusioned with it and find it no longer has much to offer.

When an apple is ripe, it drops off the tree; when it is time for a baby to be born, the conditions in the womb begin to deteriorate, triggering off the birth hormones in the baby's brain. Neptune in our natal charts has been likened to a womb. When it is time for us to leave whatever womb we've been entrenched in as adults (a habit, a group, or a situation), a Neptune transit creates disillusionment and dissolves our bonds to it. Thus disillusionment, however painful, is but a stage in our growth, signaling that we are ready to move on.

Another purpose of disillusionment under a Neptune transit is to loosen our ties with the material world and make us yearn for the spiritual side of life. Many of the things we become disillusioned with were only *illusion* to begin with. Buddhism and other spiritual teachings reveal that all in this world is transitory and illusory (Maya), while the world beyond death is real and everlasting. During Neptune transits, many people have religious experiences that change their lives. Psychic powers are often awakened that enable us to contact other planes of existence.



Neptune and Psychic Abilities

When we begin to tap into the psychic levels of our being, perhaps under Neptune transits to our birth charts, it is a common temptation to want intensely dramatic, bigger-than-life connections to spirit guides to bolster self-esteem. I can't tell you how many people out there believe that they and they alone are channeling Princess Diana or Mother Theresa. You may very well be in contact with a spirit guide of some sort, but on the astral level, spirits can assume any form they like. We can also perceive them as anyone we want them to be, thus the strong capacity for deceiving ourselves or being deceived by beings on the astral level.

Neptune rules psychic abilities AND fantasy or self-deception, and so it is wise not to let the ego become attached to psychic input. It is precisely when ego enters into the equation that we can begin to fool ourselves and to have an inflated idea of our holiness and importance. As an example of someone who is exceptionally gifted and yet remains beautifully humble, check out the amazing medium, John Edward—such integrity, because he refuses to allow his ego to get involved in his work.

My advice during the psychic development phase is to stay humble, to remain focused on using your gift to serve others, and to question every single bit of information that comes your way psychically. I don't mean NOT to believe anything that comes through, but remain unattached to being right and do seek validation for all information before accepting it provisionally as truth. I would say the same to any developing or practicing psychic. I would even say the same to John Edward if he asked, but he is already way ahead of us on that score—a healthy role model.

Neptune—the Fog on the Path



When you do awaken to the spiritual side of life, it may take many years—or even lifetimes—to deal with it in a balanced way. The novice seeker is prone to false trails, self-delusion, and ideas that are quite strange.

During many Neptune transits, an important task is to sort out, either by careful thought or bitter experience, what is of value and what is false among spiritual teachings.

Since Neptune rules both psychic experience and fraud, there are many phony or misguided occultists and self-

styled gurus. Using psychic powers and finding your way among spiritual teachers is like learning to walk all over again, only more difficult. With all that fog, who can see where to plant their feet?

HOW TO DEAL WITH PLUTO— LET GO AND LET LIVE¹

One of my astrology teachers, Charles Jayne, called Pluto the planet of female sexuality. At first, I felt this was rather sexist, but upon deeper study, I agree. While both men and women give birth to things other than children, Pluto represents a feminine type of reproductive process in which you allow something new to grow within yourself, out of the substance of yourself. Like the female sexual organs, this process is internal and hidden and, like the growth of a baby within the womb, Plutonian processes develop gradually. One common keyword for Pluto is transformation. The effect of Pluto by transit is rebirth and transformation; and whether the results are positive or negative depends on how well we are able to embrace the deep changes it brings.



For this revised edition, I am finding it hard to condense into one chapter all that Pluto represents. I wrote an entire book on the subject of Pluto and its many expressions—*Healing Pluto Problems*². It goes into far more depth than is possible here about this intense, powerful part of the human psyche and how to express it positively. Like every planet in the solar system, Pluto's expressions fall into a spectrum from the most desirable to the most undesirable. The less constructive end of Pluto's spectrum of expression ranges from abuse of power, possessiveness, and controlling others, to toxic resentment that creates progressive alienation from God and our fellow beings. The more evolved use of Pluto involves healing and transforming ourselves and others. It seems to me that Pluto's negative expressions are related to a response of **holding on**, while the positive ones relate to **letting go**.

We will be talking about "Plutonian" people a great deal in this chapter. We all have Pluto in some house of the astrology chart, and so from time to time, we all have to deal in a greater or lesser form, with the shadow side of ourselves. We all have our encounters with the more grim realities of life and the way power is all too often misused. For the Plutonian person, however, dealing with those realities is a major life dynamic. Plutonians include people with several planets in Scorpio, a number of planets in the eighth house, many aspects to natal Pluto, or Pluto near the Ascendant or Midheaven or aspecting the Sun or Moon.

If you do not yet understand aspects or houses, how would you know if you were a Plutonian? If this chapter has already caused stirrings within you, you might be a Plutonian. You might be a Plutonian if your pal or cousin who is studying astrology handed you a copy of *Healing Pluto Problems* with averted eyes and said, "I think you'd better read this!" Oh, and if someone sent you a copy of the book anonymously, then you're definitely a Plutonian!

¹ The greater part of this chapter was published by Dell Horoscope Magazine, 6/75 issue, as "Transforming Pluto's Negative Influences," and is reprinted with their permission.

² *Healing Pluto Problems*. York Beach, ME: Red Wheel/Weiser, 1986. It is still available in hard copy in a variety of languages. To order a copy, visit <http://www.redwheleiser.com> or call 1-800-423-7087.

Negative Expressions of Pluto

Charles Jayne described one syndrome of intensely emotional, possessive, jealous Plutonians who bind others to themselves through guilt and over-protection that slowly and subtly makes the other dependent. Some Plutonians are "control freaks" who manipulate everyone around them and are guarded in every new situation lest something arise that they can't direct. They typically get their own way through manipulation—subtle or not so subtle—to make others feel guilty or ashamed. Although men can certainly display these behaviors, women have traditionally had to rely more heavily on mechanisms like guilt-tripping due to their lack of more direct access to power. This inequity was especially true in strongly patriarchal cultures, where the wife was supposedly subjugated to her husband.



The unrelenting vindictiveness of the scorpion type of Scorpio represents one negative Plutonian pattern. (Remember that the scorpion destroys itself when it stings.) There can be a holding in of emotions that stifles spontaneity—in particular, a rigid control over anger, and a deep fear that any expression of anger will result in abandonment. People who suppress anger this rigidly are prone to engaging in intense and even occasionally violent love affairs.

Another common Plutonian pattern is secretiveness, self-protectiveness, suspiciousness, and defensiveness that may border on paranoia.

Even perfectly normal human needs and feelings may be hidden when Plutonians are afraid to be open about their thoughts and feelings. Consequently, they can come to feel alien to the human race. This pattern contributes to the sense of isolation that burdens many Plutonians. A therapy or self-help group can go a long way toward counteracting this sense of alienation, for when Plutonians see that others share many of their thoughts, reactions, and experiences, they no longer feel so abnormal. Sharing, in fact, is a key lesson for Plutonians to learn, for in possessing a thing completely, they are alone.

The hermit-like existence of this type of Plutonian often alternates with *sybiotic* (joined at the hip) relationships, where neither partner can seem to exist or make a move without the other. Isolation and *sybiosis* are opposite ends of the same pole; and Plutonians may swing between the two extremes, not comfortable with either, until they finally learn to operate somewhere in the middle. That same sense of isolation can be a cause of promiscuity, which is seldom sexually satisfying and is often brought on by an aching need to escape their isolation.

A related pattern when Pluto and Scorpio are strong is a fear of abandonment, the after-effect of traumatic losses and betrayals in the past. Plutonians overdo it in trying to "help" troubled people, hoping to reform or make over the object of their attention. They like to think of themselves as saintly but often unconsciously "help" as a means of controlling people or making them dependent, in order to not be so painfully alone.

Being a rescuer leads to a false sense of self-esteem that only lasts as long as the other person is grateful, needs them for survival, and stays reformed. Unfortunately, such unequal relationships are maintained by a lack of emotional honesty and openness on both sides. In consequence, unexpressed resentment tends to build up on both sides, all too often leading to a bitter, nasty ending of the connection.

There are other emotional difficulties related to the typical Plutonian's holding-on/holding-in pattern. The obsessive-compulsive personality hangs on to and repeats an action or thought. In addition to emotional difficulties, "holding in" also produces such physical problems as those due to chronic muscular tensions, including headaches, backaches, constipation, and arthritis. When not due to medical causes, sexual dysfunction can be partially due to the control or holding in of sexual feelings and the inability to let go in an orgasm. Where the man is sensitive enough to want to satisfy the woman sexually, orgasm can become the focus of a tremendous power struggle. Today, a growing number of men need Viagra or other drugs to enhance sexual performance, a sign that sexuality cannot be divorced from the other serious difficulties in today's relationships.

The planet Pluto is related to nuclear power and atomic energy. In a nuclear reaction, one kind of matter is transformed into another, releasing tremendous energy in the process. Pluto's transformations in our lives can be similar; like nuclear reactions, the released energy needs to be channeled into constructive uses. Negative uses of Pluto, especially abuse of power or trust, can create psychological fallout in the form of resentment, guilt, or regrets that linger for years. Positive uses of Pluto, on the other hand, can be life-transforming.



Using Pluto's Energies for Healing

The **holding in** pattern has so much undesirable potential that it is no wonder Pluto and Scorpio have bad reputations, yet the essence of any planet can be used for either good or bad. We choose, consciously or unconsciously, how we will use it. The greater self-awareness we gain through astrology is accompanied by greater responsibility to make the best use of each planet and sign. Nowhere is this more true than with Pluto, a planet with tremendous potential for either destruction or transformation. Let us look, then, to see how Pluto's energies can be used to change our lives constructively.

Pluto's positive expressions—the **letting go** response—consist of allowing change and transformation to happen, even bringing them about consciously through determination and focus. (No one is more focused than the Plutonian intent on healing!) Rebirth and regeneration are words that describe this positive use of Pluto—the phoenix side of Scorpio, rising out of its own ashes.





ALTERNATIVE HEALING TOOLS FOR PLUTONIANS: TRANSFORMING THE SELF AND OTHERS

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The Obligatory Disclaimer: This information is not meant as a recommendation of any particular method or individual practitioner. Visit the websites for more indepth information .Alternative methods are not intended to replace formal counseling or medical care when needed. Plutonians, turn on your innate BS detector before selecting a practitioner or method. If it doesn't feel right for you, try something else!

FLOWER ESSENCES: Also known as flower remedies, these gentle, natural healing catalysts can support people in releasing longstanding emotional blocks and finding new ways to perceive and respond to life's challenges—an excellent adjunct to other types of healing. For a large collection of articles on the subject, visit Vibration Magazine, the free online educational quarterly I co-edit with Dr. Deborah Bier. The current issue would be at:

<http://www.essences.com/vibration/> My e-book, *Flower Remedies: How Plants Can Heal Us*, is available at <http://www.moonmavenpublications.com>

HOMEOPATHY: High-potency homeopathic remedies act on so many interconnected levels of the mind, body, and emotions that, when correctly prescribed, they are far more deep-acting than flower essences. Because of their potency, a wrong prescription can create many difficulties. For that reason, I strongly advise against self-selection of high-potency homeopathic remedies. For recommendation of a certified homeopath, visit The Council for Homeopathic Certification at <http://www.homeopathicdirectory.com> or the National Center for Homeopathy at <http://www.homeopathic.org> .

THE RECONNECTION: Originated and taught by Dr. Eric Pearl, this form of energy healing serves to reconnect us with parts of our minds, bodies, and spirit that closed down due to trauma or loss. It initiates a long-unfolding process of reunion with those parts of ourselves and with family, peers, and the greater community, much-needed for Plutonians who are in a state of alienation and isolation. Begin by reading Dr. Pearl's book, *The Reconnection: Heal Others, Heal Yourself* (2001, Hay House) For information on seminars in many major cities, call 1-888-ERICPEARL or visit Dr. Pearl's website at <http://www.thereconnection.com>. Practitioners trained by Dr. Pearl are listed on the site.

HEALING FROM THE BODY LEVEL UP™: A potent and fast-acting healing system developed by Dr. Judith A. Swack that integrates biomedical science, Neuro-linguistic Programming, psychology, applied kinesiology, energy psychology techniques, her own unique methods and spiritual practices. The healing begins by using kinesiology to dialogue with various parts of the mind, body, and spirit to discover root causes of deep and persistent problems. Then various healing tools are deployed to get at those roots. For information on seminars and practitioners, visit <http://www.hblu.org>

PAST LIFE REGRESSION AND THERAPY: Some hard-to-heal painful and dysfunctional patterns in career and other important areas of life stem from traumatic past life experiences. When such influences are suspected, work with a certified past life therapist may be helpful. The International Association for Regression Research & Therapies Inc. (IARRT) is a non-profit organization dedicated to increasing the acceptance and use of professional regression sessions through education, association and research. For information on their conferences and a list of practitioners they have certified, visit <http://www.iarrt.org>

HEALING FROM NEAR-DEATH EXPERIENCES: One of the ways Plutonians become Plutonian is through undergoing a near-death experience, which has been shown to have profoundly life-altering effects that are not readily understood by loved ones. The website of The International Association for Near-Death Studies at <http://www.iands.org> has a large collection of informational articles, access to books on the subject, and local support groups.

From: The Outer Planets and Inner Life, Part 1: The Career Path of the Exceptional Soul
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Available at <http://www.moonmavenpublications.com>

In many instances, terminally ill cancer patients treated with psychotherapy and other healing tools do not die, but instead are reborn, because intensive treatment freed them from old patterns. Many begin living an entirely new life with a renewed life purpose, making amazing changes in career and lifestyle. Both psychotherapy and healing are related to Pluto, and positive Pluto energies counteract the negative Pluto energies with a healing result. To be regenerated is to be renewed, rejuvenated, or healed. Plutonians have great potential for becoming healers, whether through traditional medical channels, or through psychotherapy and spiritual healing.

Other expressions of Pluto can have tremendous power for either good or harm, and when they are misused, they can present a danger. Hypnotism, for example, can be positive when used for healing or giving up habits, but negative when used to achieve control over others. Witchcraft, voodoo, and other arts our culture calls "magic" because we do not understand their principles also have power both for healing and for destruction or control. Mediumship is a Plutonian activity when control of the ego is relinquished to an unseen force like a guide or departed individual. If not pursued carefully and with safeguards, however, it can leave mediums open to possession or to taking on the physical and mental conditions of those they are trying to help.

The great power and corresponding danger of such arts are precisely why much occult knowledge historically was carefully guarded. (Occult and psychic powers actually are a combination of Neptune and Pluto.) It is significant, I feel, that the existence of the planet Pluto itself was hidden from us until the 1930's and that since its discovery, humanity has made great strides in understanding psychology and the occult, both of which are associated with this planet. It is as if humanity as a whole, ready or not, must now deal with the various types of powers and energies Pluto rules, from nuclear energy to healing energy.

Change and transformation are inevitable and even positive parts of life. To grow and progress, we must be willing to change. When a living thing stops growing, it begins to die. At the most extreme end of Pluto's spectrum, resisting change or transformation or even trying to block it from happening can create a backlash of destructiveness either turned in on the self or turned loose on others. On a global level, for example, tyranny and efforts to dominate third world countries for economic gain often create terrorist activity.

Since Pluto cannot ultimately be held in or shut down, let's turn our attention to ways to transform Pluto's use from negative to positive. Many clues can be found in modern humanistic psychology and metaphysics. Astrological insights must often be combined with other disciplines such as spiritual healing for transformation of consciousness to occur. The table on the previous page describes healing tools that are particularly relevant to Plutonian patterns and lists resources for learning more about them.

Certainly, Pluto's transformations may be painful at times. In coming through a Pluto transit, one friend likened it to giving birth to herself without the anaesthetic. However, just as with labor pains, the more you tense up and resist rebirth, the more painful it will be. Like natural childbirth, if you can welcome and work with the change, it will not be as painful. Even with seemingly-destructive events that take place under Pluto transits, the final outcome can often be seen as positive.

Most forms of change are hard to accept. Spiritual teachings work to counter this normal human reluctance by reminding us to let go of both the past and the future to live

in the now. For instance, the major technique of healing in Science of Mind, a branch of metaphysics, is a special kind of prayer called a treatment, which is always in the present tense. The desired condition, such as good health, is affirmed as fulfilled right now. Past belief patterns or relationships that hold the person back are negated and dissolved, as are current conditions contrary to the goal. This focus on the present and letting go of past negativity is necessary to the healing. These treatments have produced powerful healings, even of very serious illnesses.

In order to lessen the negative effects of Pluto, we must learn to accept, even to embrace change. If we are not willing to accept changes, they may come from the outside, sometimes in seemingly destructive ways. And yet, the deeper we go into spiritual studies, the more we discern that what appears to be externally based most often has its roots in what is already going on inside of us. (Though I cannot discuss this complex topic here in an introductory volume, many of you, especially the mature Plutonians, may already know what I mean.)

Pluto's Relationship to Sexuality

Another important area of life related to the eighth house, Pluto, and Scorpio is sexuality. I have tried for a long time to understand why so many religious teachings are judgmental about our sexuality, and I think I am beginning to see it. So often a sexual connection between two people invites other Plutonian behaviors, like possessiveness, jealousy, relating to others on the basis of lust only, trying to control and manipulate, and using sex compulsively as an escape from isolation.

However rather than the letdown that comes when lovers find themselves just as isolated after lovemaking as before, there are also positive sexual exchanges that transform, regenerate, and energize. After all, there is no birth without sex; positive sexuality must be related to a new birth of creativity and growth. This can happen when we learn to use Pluto's energies positively and get away from the need to possess and control others. This can take place between healthy, creative, free individuals.

Just Say No—to Plutonian Patterns of Relating

Though our seeming separateness may haunt us and give us great pain at times, separation is an illusion, for we are but cells in one great being, the One God. This sense of separation is at the heart of many difficult love problems that Plutonians can face. We can shift our expression of Pluto by gradually training ourselves to give up jealousy, possessiveness, guilt-trips, controlling, and manipulating. Besides delaying growth and progress, these patterns invite negative Plutonian reactions, such as withdrawal, isolation or physical illness. Other Plutonian modes of relating to eliminate are vindictiveness, revenge, and resentment.

Two people embroiled in vengefulness and bitter recrimination are just as entrapped as two people in a



symbiotic "love" relationship—and very often that is how they started out. A frequent motive for murder is jealousy and revenge between lovers. Even when vengefulness is not this extreme, it paralyzes the growth of both parties, tying up energies that could be used constructively. Vengeance is dangerous; the destruction set into motion comes back magnified many times. We see this principle in personal relationships, just as we see it in relationships between nations.

How can Plutonians learn more positive ways of interacting? A primary way is self-awareness. Negative patterns may be so ingrained and covered with defenses that they can be hard to see at first. They may be brought to light by careful watchfulness, possibly in well-guided groups, where such behavior is often readily played out and noticed than in individual therapy. Another corrective is for Plutonians to gradually accept that they can never really bind or be bound to another person. Each person has important life tasks, talents, and interests to complete that must be free to develop over time. Ties that subvert self-development are stifling of our individuality. Plutonians need to form connections based on love that allows each party freedom and full self-expression.



If you are in a destructive Plutonian relationship, what can you do to break free? If therapy or healing does not bring about the desired change, it may be necessary to let go of that tie. Say the following statement whenever that person comes to mind: "Bless _____ and release him to his higher good." At first you may feel hypocritical blessing someone you would rather curse; however as you continue, your feeling about that person will change and so will the relationship. Other spiritual teachers say to imagine a white cross over that person every time you think of

him or her. Another technique is to write 70 times a day for seven days a statement such as the one above to release the person.

Fear of essential isolation—also called the Illusion of Separation—is universal. Two things can help us to overcome it. One is to concentrate on our own development, learning to express to the fullest our own unique gifts and creative talents—and we all have them—so we that feel complete and fulfilled rather than inadequate and inconsequential. When we love ourselves more, we have less need for the unconditional love and acceptance of others and more inner serenity.

The second thing to know is that while we exist separately, we are really all one—that at the level of the eternal soul, separation is an illusion. There is one Power which created and permeates every person, place, and thing in the universe. Therefore, while we are responsible for our own development, we are one with the Universe, which loves and assists us as part of itself. One tool that I have come to love in these later years for ending the Illusion of Separation is *A Course in Miracles*, which you can research on the internet³.

³ One major source of information is The Foundation for Inner Peace website at: <http://www.acim.org/>

Pluto Transits—Endings and Beginnings

Under a Pluto transit, suppressed feelings, even those from the very distant past, may come to the surface due to circumstances that mirror and evoke them. For instance, if you've never allowed yourself to grieve over some loss, current events under a Pluto transit may bring that grief to the surface, as fresh as when it first occurred. Or you may relive some betrayal of trust or abuse of power, even from childhood, under the spur of a difficult interaction in the present. The textbook Plutonian individual exerts control over the self and all too often may be unable to express anger or other negative feelings, at a considerable cost to spontaneity and to mental and physical health. When long-suppressed emotions like these are brought to the surface and allowed expression, you rid yourself of a great backlog of frozen emotions. In addition, what you learn in this process can leave you free to react to present-day challenges without the old baggage.



A major issue that can arise during a Pluto transit is that of control and the proper use of power. A subtle power struggle may be going on, the parties playing on guilt and dependency in order to maintain dominance. Plutonian patterns don't just play out in romantic and family ties, but in career settings as well. The house Pluto is placed in natively gives a clue to the areas of life you are most prone to Plutonian interactions.

Under a Pluto transit, you may become aware of these dynamics and seek new ways of relating. Sometimes this means forming ties with a different set of people. The transition from old to new relationships is often accompanied by a tricky and often acrimonious disengagement from old ties, for Plutonians don't easily give up their hold on you. Over the long haul, however, you can wind up with healthier relationships in that area of life. The house Pluto is transiting is another zone where game-playing may be going on.

A Pluto transit to almost any problem area in the chart can be a window for healing and growth. You often will go through a purging period, wherein the problem is intensified to a critical point, then you may withdraw to look inward at the causes, and slowly try to deal with them. This is not easy, but you will become stronger and healthier through the process. A Pluto transit to a key area of your chart (Sun, Moon, and Ascendant, for example) is bound to bring a type of rebirth.

Many astrologers feel that a transit of an outer planet (Saturn, Uranus, Neptune or Pluto) to another outer planet is not significant because these are not "personal" planets. I do not find this to be so. In particular, I have found the transit of Pluto over natal Neptune at around age 28-30 to be highly significant--especially for those with Pluto or Neptune prominent in the natal chart. In many cases, where Neptune's expressions had been on a negative level (confusion, irrationality, masochism, addiction, or escapism) the transit of Pluto over Neptune first produced a "bottoming out" on these kinds of behaviors, followed by higher expressions of Neptune's energies. In many cases, including my own, this transit was the beginning of interest or study in the occult and spiritual realm.

A major Pluto transit comes to us all in our early forties, when transiting Pluto squares natal Pluto and goes on to aspect the same planets Pluto aspected at birth. In the process, any major, ongoing psychological pattern having to do with Pluto will intensify. This transit—part of the so-called Midlife Crisis—is a powerful window for transforming negative Plutonian expressions into more constructive ones. To understand this period well, we must analyze and thoroughly understand all the aspects Pluto forms in the birth chart, as the natal angles between Pluto and the other planet in the pair are mirrored by new angles formed by transits during this cycle.

For instance, suppose that Pluto is conjunct Venus in your birth chart. When transiting Pluto squares natal Pluto, it will also square natal Venus, bringing the relationship patterns signified by that natal aspect to a head. (See the description of a Venus-Pluto aspect in Chapter Six for more detail.) For instance, a woman in her 40s who married—let's be frank—for money and who had tolerated her husband's womanizing till now, may find money and social privilege is no longer sufficient reason to stay in a relationship that has become demeaning. If she chooses to leave the marriage during the Pluto square to natal Pluto, difficult as it may be to make that change, she learns to stop handing her power over to a partner and reclaims it.

Using Pluto Well—A Rebirth is Possible

In this chapter, we have considered Pluto in many forms, both constructive and destructive. We have examined a few ideas on how to change the level of expression from negative to positive. As we are progressively more able to let go rather than hold on during periods of change and transformation, our experience of Pluto will seem more and more positive. In many ways, this process is the death of our old egotistical selves. Evangelical Christians say, "Ye must be born again." This injunction contains a profound truth that goes beyond the church. We must be willing to let the old die so that something new can be born into our lives. Pluto is the planet of death and rebirth for all of us.

THE TWELVE HOUSES OF THE HOROSCOPE: HOW INNER ATTITUDES DETERMINE OUTER REALITIES¹

The table on the next page summarizes the subject matters of each of the twelve houses of the astrological chart. Each house describes what we are like in some particular area of life, but it is important to understand that the signs on the house cusps and planets placed in the houses illuminate, rather than cause, these conditions. Just as we can't blame the planets and signs for what happens to us, neither can we blame the factors associated with the houses in our individual birth charts for the conditions that surround us.



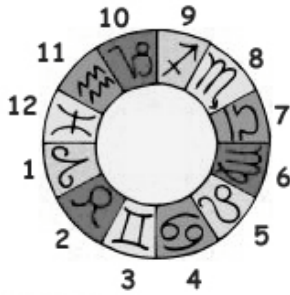
Many astrology books and magazines define the houses according to external circumstances. For instance, they might say that the second house shows how you will fare in money matters, the fifth your children, the seventh your marriage partner, and so on. These descriptions sound as though everything in your life is determined by something outside your control—Fate, people in authority, the economy, or heredity. If you have Jupiter in the second, they might assure you that luck will just keep coming your way in money matters, leaving the impression that you need only sit back and wait for it.

The modern astrological position based on psychology, and metaphysics is that definitions like these are over-simplified. The prevailing viewpoint is that external conditions alone do not determine your experiences; instead, your inner attitudes, beliefs, emotions, and needs act as magnets to determine the outer, tangible circumstances of your life. People with Jupiter in the second house, for example, aren't lucky due to Fate, but rather due to attitudes of openness, enthusiasm, and optimism that lead them to act on opportunities others might let pass by. For the most part, we make our own luck, good or bad. No doubt the truth lies somewhere between these two positions—the fluctuations of the economy cannot be ignored, and yet our relative position within the economic circumstances of our times is greatly affected by our attitudes and beliefs.

Meaty questions like these aside, we can analyze the planets and signs in a given house to see what part we play in any of our seeming misfortunes and what responsibility we need to accept for unwanted patterns in that area in order to make our lives better. The houses show what we attract to ourselves by our attitudes. People tend to manifest both the positive and negative sides of any given sign or planet at different times. Thus, you can improve your life immensely by analyzing the problematic ways of using the sign on the cusp of a house² and any planets in that house, then working more consciously over time to express those energies in a constructive way.

¹ Original version published in Dell Horoscope, 11/74, as "The Truth About the Houses—Inner Attitudes Determine Outer Realities." ©1974 by Dell Publishing Co., Inc. Reprinted with their permission.

² The cusp of a house is the border between it and the adjoining house, e.g. between the end of the second house and the beginning of the third. The zodiac sign on the cusp of a house describes, in part, how you function in that area of life. For example, if you have Libra on the cusp of a house, you will show some Libra qualities in matters related to that house. You will also hear the term cusp used for the dividing line between two zodiac sign, and so to hear that someone is born on the cusp of Aries and Taurus means that their birthday is right on the edge of the two signs.



BASIC WHEEL AND
SIGNS ASSOCIATED
WITH THE 12 HOUSES

**CHEAT SHEET: MATTERS ASSOCIATED
WITH THE TWELVE HOUSES**
©2004 By Donna Cunningham

Note: “Related Planet and Sign” designations in this table refer to the planets and signs most naturally related to the houses in their interests and focus of energy. For instance, Libra, Venus, and the seventh house share a

great emphasis on relationships, especially love relationships. The tenth house, Saturn, and Capricorn share a strong orientation toward career and long-range achievements. This traditional association should not be confused with the signs or planets in a given house of an individual’s birth chart, for those specific placements depend on the time, date, and place of birth.

<u>HOUSES & ASSOCIATED MATTERS:</u>	<u>RELATED SIGN*:</u>	<u>RELATED PLANET*:</u>
<u>First:</u> First impressions and first approach to situations, appearance, image, self-presentation, the basic physical vehicle	Aries	Mars
<u>Second:</u> Money and ways of earning it, money management and attitudes toward finance, things valued more than money	Taurus	Venus
<u>Third:</u> Communication, thinking and learning style, siblings and near relatives, neighbors, basic coursework, commuting	Gemini	Mercury
<u>Fourth:</u> Home and home life, roots, family ties, heredity, family influence, the nurturing parent, senior years	Cancer	The Moon
<u>Fifth:</u> Children, romance, creativity, self-expression, performing, leisure activities, gambling and other forms of risk-taking	Leo	The Sun
<u>Sixth:</u> Work and its meaning, work habits, types of jobs, coworkers and employees, health and health habits	Virgo	Mercury
<u>Seventh:</u> Partnerships—personal and business, close, committed relationships, types of people we attract, sharing	Libra	Venus
<u>Eighth:</u> Sexuality, money you don’t earn (inheritances, grants, etc), taxes, partner’s resources, birth, death, transformation, healing	Scorpio	Pluto
<u>Ninth:</u> Religion and philosophy of life, higher education, advanced studies, legal matters, foreign lands, distance travel	Sagittarius	Jupiter
<u>Tenth:</u> Career and long-term goals, how you are remembered, parental authority, bosses and the type of boss you are	Capricorn	Saturn
<u>Eleventh:</u> Friendship, relationship to peer group, group membership, social consciousness, activism, aspirations	Aquarius	Uranus
<u>Twelfth:</u> Things that are repressed or hidden, self-defeating behavior, chronic illness, service, retreats, spiritual quest	Pisces	Neptune

In this chapter we will examine each house of the horoscope in turn to see how attitudes toward the associated areas of life influence our experiences. We can uncover these often-unconscious attitudes by considering the sign on the cusp of that house, any planets in the house, aspects those planets form, and the ruler of the house³. In working with this material, take time to look at your birth chart and determine the signs and planets associated with each house. If you are unfamiliar with the layout of a chart, the **sample chart** on the next page can help you sort it out. Match the glyphs in the table in Chapter One with the glyphs on the chart to figure out which planets and signs are in a given house.

Houses that contain two or more factors are strongly emphasized, as are the ones containing the Sun and Moon. (In the sample chart, the Sun is in the eleventh house, the Moon is in the sixth house, and the first and the tenth houses are also emphasized because they have two planets each.) The more strongly emphasized a house, the more time, energy, and attention you are likely to give the matters associated with that house. The particular planets in a house show important dynamics and needs that we play out in the areas governed by that house—for instance, if the Sun is in a particular house, that is where we tend to seek self-esteem and look for our identity. If Uranus is in a house, that is where we are likely to rebel against convention.

Newcomer Alert: Does this kind of analysis seem complicated? With this chapter and the two that follow, we are delving into some of the more technical facets of astrology. Chart interpretation is a complex subject, so if you are brand new to astrology, expect that it may take time—and even an astrology class or three to master it! After 35 years, I still learn something new with every chart I do, and that is why it continues to hold my interest. You can, however, gain a great deal of insight by simply identifying what planets are in the various houses of your chart and then reviewing the meanings of those planets given the chapters that discuss them.

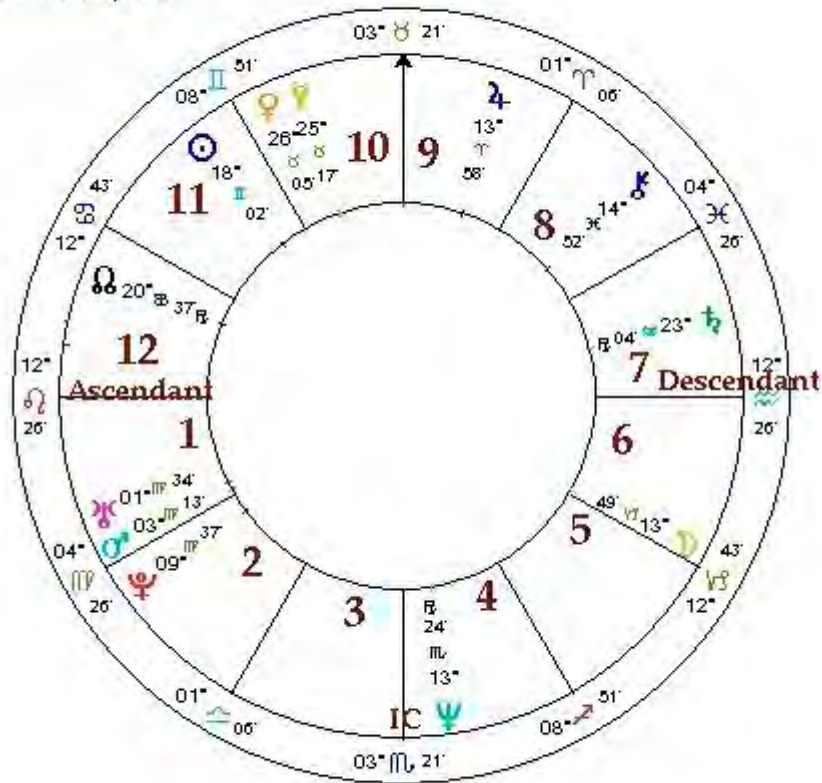
One thing that may strike you when you look at your own chart is that many of the houses are empty. This is almost universal—we are dealing with only eight planets, plus the Sun, Moon, and Chiron, and because Mercury and Venus are near the Sun in the zodiac, they are most often in the same house as the Sun or the neighboring one.

An empty house, however, does not necessarily mean that the matters of that house are unimportant—for instance, if your seventh house is empty, do not conclude that you will never be married. The seventh house is associated with the sign Libra and the planet Venus, and so with an empty seventh house, you would look to see if there are planets in Libra or if Venus has many aspects. You would also look at the ruler of the seventh house to see what house it is in, for that house gives valuable clues as to what partnership means to you. If you have Gemini on the seventh house cusp, for instance, you would look at Mercury, the ruler of Gemini. If you then discovered that Mercury is in the eleventh house, this would signify that you would want your mate to be your best friend, and the friendship dimension of the partnership would be important to your happiness in the relationship. With that introduction, then, let's consider what each house means.

³ The ruler of a house is the ruler of the sign on its cusp—for example, with Leo on the seventh house cusp, the Sun is the ruler, so you would look at the sign and position of the Sun. With Aquarius on that cusp, the ruler of the seventh would be Uranus. Unless the person has Aries Rising, the ruler of a house is different from the associated planet and sign given on the cheat sheet.

Johnny Depp
 June 9, 1963, 8:44 AM
 Owensboro, KY

Midheaven



H#: Cusp Sign: Ruler: Planets in house: H#: Cusp Sign: Ruler: Planets in House:

1	Leo	Sun	Uranus in Virgo Mars in Virgo	7	Aquarius	Uranus	Saturn in Aquarius
2	Virgo	Mercury	Pluto in Virgo	8	Pisces	Neptune	Chiron in Pisces
3	Libra	Venus	None	9	Aries	Mars	Jupiter in Aries
4	Scorpio	Pluto	Neptune in Scorpio	10	Taurus	Venus	Mercury and Venus, Taurus
5	Sagittarius	Jupiter	None	11	Gemini	Mercury	Sun in Gemini
6	Capricorn	Saturn	Moon in Capricorn	12	Cancer	Moon	N. Node Cancer

Note: Johnny's Depp's AstroDataBank record cites the information above, rated AA, Birth Record in hand. For more charts of celebrities, visit <http://www.AstroDataBank.com>

The First House



The first house describes how others see us. This impression is determined by our outward behavior and the impression we give out, often on a subtle level, as well things that are communicated by our body language and way of dressing. Some call it the *mask* or persona we wear to hide our true self and our vulnerabilities from the world. The sign on the Ascendant (the first house cusp, also known as the Rising Sign) and the planets in the first house show our more surface ways of interacting with others and of attempting to get what we need. We can analyze the first house to see how we come across to people, especially those who don't know us well.

To understand our general level of comfort around others, we can assess how harmonious or discordant the astrological components of this house are with the needs and traits shown in the rest of the chart. Consider the plight, for example, of a Leo man with Capricorn on the Ascendant. Fun-loving Leo wants warmth and attention, but the Capricorn Ascendant shows that he comes across as rather forbidding—self-sufficient, taciturn, and even gloomy, drawing out a different kind of response than the hungry lion needs.

Look at your own first house from this point of view. Does the impression you give others get you what you need and want from others? If not, you can work to more consciously express yourself and change your way of relating, in order to get your needs met. Often it is hard to perceive exactly how you come across to others. The ideal way is to study a videotape of yourself, but lacking a videotape, you may need to rely on others to reflect it back to you. Participating in a self-help group or engaging in candid discussions with insightful friends may help you see yourself better. Even such things as an unposed photo or seeing yourself reflected in a mirror or a shop window can give clues.

The type of behavior—verbal and nonverbal—described by the first house is generally learned very early. It represents ways your parents raised you to act in social situations as well as coping strategies you adopted in order to get what you needed in your family. Some such patterns are carried on long after they cease to be appropriate or helpful, such as the forty-year-old woman still playing the cute, coy child. Not all such strategies are dysfunctional, of course; some of them serve you quite well and make up your own particular brand of charm. Many of the things our parents taught us about how to conduct ourselves in the world turn out to be assets—for instance, the Taurus Rising individual was taught to be grounded and calm, even when others are in a state of uproar. Ask yourself where the behavior came from, whether it is adaptive in your current situation, and whether it is helpful to you in relating to others on an adult level.

First-house behavior is important to understand because it is the first impression you make on people, and generally this is what stays with them. People usually take you at your own evaluation. If you appear helpless, for instance, that is how they will see you also. If you come seem confident, as though you belong, then they tend to assume that you do belong. Thus, your own behavior often determines how people respond to you;

and it is helpful to be conscious of that behavior and modify it, if necessary, to portray your true self and your real needs.

The Second House

In the introduction to this chapter, we noted that the second house—similar in nature to the sign Taurus—is traditionally seen as money. Attitudes have a great deal to do with our external financial situation, as in the example of Jupiter in the second. Our culture has mixed and conflicting attitudes about money, ranging from it being the primary way of judging a person's worth, to the puritanical belief that it is the root of all evil. Yet money itself is neutral—only the way people handle it is good or bad. No doubt, dealing with money and possessions in a sound, well-balanced way is an important spiritual lesson that we must master.

As in other areas of life, your attitudes determine your experiences in second-house matters. If you resent having to earn money or subconsciously feel that it is evil, you are unlikely to have much of it or hold on to it when you do get it.



The person with Pisces on the second house cusp or Neptune in the second, who is doubtlessly other-worldly, may feel it is not spiritual to have material things and feels that "God will provide." Consequently, his financial affairs are likely to be vague and confused, he never knows where his money goes, and he may suffer a good deal in financial matters until his attitudes are more balanced. The second house in your chart describes your attitudes toward both money and possessions.

Even more basic than the second-house relationship to finances is another meaning-- your values. What you value most in life is a key concept because it often becomes a focus of action and leads to the formation of goals. Not only that, it determines what you are willing to do to earn money and what your financial priorities are likely to be. The person with Neptune in the second may spend money on crystals, workshops, and New Age books rather than on material goods that others consider important. The person with Sagittarius or Jupiter in the second values higher education and the accumulation of knowledge and wisdom. This is another reason such people are often "lucky" with money—the more you know and the better educated you are, even self-educated, the more you are likely to earn.

The Third House

Mercury and Gemini, the planet and sign most associated with communication, are also naturally associated with the third house. We hear so much about the importance of communication—between lovers, parent and child, employer and employee, and between groups in society. If you feel others don't understand you, look to the third house to see how well you make yourself understood. This house shows both your attitude and your approach toward this vital skill. People with Sagittarius on the third house cusp might be very open and invite communication from others, while people with Scorpio on the third can be reserved and discourage communication by a biting and often sarcastic mode of speech.

Each of these behaviors may reinforce itself. A caustic Scorpio speech pattern can drive others away; then the person feels bitter and alienated and communicates even less. People

with Sagittarius on the third house cusp, by contrast, may have positive and interesting experiences with communication because they are open and wish to learn, so the desire to communicate keeps growing. On the other hand, the person with Sagittarius on the third might be dogmatic and resistant to others' ideas, while the person with Scorpio on the third might excel as a counselor through the ability to listen intensely and communicate on deeper levels.

The third house also governs everyday mental activities and chores—not how well you grasp Joseph Campbell and Stephen Hawking (that's the ninth house), but how well you sort out your paperwork. It shows how you approach such matters, whether you are efficient at them, and how they affect you. People with Neptune in the third, for example, may not know where they parked the car last night. However, don't get so annoyed at their spaciness that you miss hearing the marvelous new spiritual insight they came up with this morning in the shower or the fascinating dream they had last night!

Brothers and sisters are traditionally associated with the third house, but it is more correct to say that the third shows not the actual people involved but how they affected you or how you experienced them. You may have Scorpio on the third and so were jealous of your brother, but another sibling who loved him might have Libra on the third. An only child who yearned for a brother or sister and even created an imaginary one might have Pisces on the third or Neptune in that house. People with the Sun (the sense of self) in the third often derive much of their identity from relationships with siblings—whether that experience was predominantly loving or full of conflict. Again, it is not the concrete, outer reality that is important but the inner reality, that is, your feelings and attitudes about that situation.



The Fourth House



The fourth house, related to the Moon and the sign Cancer, traditionally represents such matters as your home, mother, base of security, and heredity or parental influence. Basic needs or issues of the fourth house include nurturing and security. Nurturing (i.e., meeting the child's physical and emotional needs) is not limited to the mother, and can be provided by both parents or any number of people, but the sum experience of nurturing develops the infant's sense of what psychoanalyst Erik Erikson called "basic trust." Whether the person is basically secure or insecure depends on how that nurturing was experienced.

The fourth house, planets in it, and its ruler can describe what that experience was and what the person does to feel secure. The basic lesson to be learned, of course, is that security is to be found within ourselves, not in anything external. For example, the person with Taurus on the fourth probably had a rather calm, traditional, down-to-earth upbringing, but may seek security in material possessions—

accumulating THINGS until the house is cluttered. The person with Aquarius on the fourth may well have had an erratic childhood where there were many geographic moves, and therefore may find security in not having a permanent home, but being free to move around at will.

As we were nurtured, so do we nurture; therefore, the fourth can also give clues to your behavior in a role where caretaking is required of you, such as in parenthood.

People with Taurus on the fourth may have had a more stable parental role model than people with Aquarius on the fourth and so are able to provide more stability and security to their own offspring. One drawback is that these parents don't usually have a great deal of flexibility to meet our society's rapidly-changing standards and conditions. They can be conservative when it comes to child rearing. Also, who is to say that the person with Aquarius on the fourth has not had a better preparation to make the best of our incredibly mobile lifestyle in the New Millennium?

The Fifth House

Nowhere was traditional astrological thought more apparent than in the interpretation of the fifth house, which represents children. It was taken for granted that you would have them. Several of my teachers instilled the traditional but sexist interpretation that the fifth house in a woman's chart represented her children, while in a man's chart it represented his creative efforts. Today we see it differently—men can and do make children their major concern, and we have discarded the notion that women are less creative than men.

It is more accurate to say that the fifth house shows your attitude toward children. In today's world, it is more often attitude and preference, rather than social pressure that determines whether or not you have children. Those attitudes and preferences are shown by the sign on the cusp of the fifth house and any planets in that house. Timing for the birth of children and major developments in your children's lives is often related to transits to the fifth house and any planets placed there. Your feelings and attitudes about children determine your child-rearing practices and therefore play a great role in molding your offspring and your relationships with them. You can also learn more about what the children would be like—even sometimes their Sun signs—by analyzing the fifth house.

In addition, the fifth house shows your attitude toward your Inner Child, which then affects your ability to engage in other major fifth-house concerns, like recreation and creative self-expression. If you are able, as few adults are, to be truly childlike, then you are able to release and renew yourself in play and are more likely to be creative. Furthermore, you will foster the creativity of your own children or children who become part of your life.

The fifth house describes both the avenues of your greatest creativity and the ways it can be brought out. For instance, the person with Scorpio on the fifth could well have something creative to offer in the realms of psychology and psychotherapy. This type of activity would be most successful when the person has the opportunity to be alone and think deeply and introspectively. People with Gemini on the fifth, on the other hand, might

access their creativity most easily while brainstorming with others. Analyze your own fifth house, and don't limit your concept of creativity to the traditional fine arts. A person with Mars in Cancer in the fifth might design and build a storage module for the closet that would be just as creative and certainly more practical than a painting or a poem. A Taurus on the fifth form of creativity might be landscaping.

Understanding your fifth house can help you discover and develop your creative gifts. This would include the sign on the fifth house, any planets in it, and the sign and house placement of the ruler of the fifth. You might also want to look at the sign and house placement of the Sun, which is the natural ruler of the fifth. My mentor, Rod Chase found that some of the most famous works of creative people reflect their Sun sign—for example, Whistler, who was a Cancer, was most famous for the painting of his mother.

Suppose that you have Saturn in the fifth, a position many astrologers would consider an impediment to creative success. Don't persuade yourself that you aren't creative, because we all have a fifth house and we all have our own individual brand of creativity. With Saturn there, creative blocks may be due to inner fears and inhibitions—perhaps the belief that you must be perfect or else not even try. Or perhaps an authority figure taught that it was frivolous to waste time on such pursuits when you ought to be hard at work on more serious career goals.



With this placement in your chart, your best creative work would be of a Saturnian nature and might be in a solid medium like pottery or sculpture. Perhaps it means you will become more creative as you grow older. Grandma Moses was a mid-Twentieth century American painter who did not start painting until her later years, when her so-called primitive style earned her work a place in art history and in many of the finest museums. I don't believe her birth time is known, but I'd be willing to bet she had Saturn or Capricorn connected with her fifth house.

The Sixth House

Work and health are twin concerns of the sixth house, just as they are of the associated sign, Virgo. Work and health are interrelated on a very deep level psychological and spiritual level having to do with our life purpose. How many times have you heard of an individual who retired and then suffered a health setback? Productivity and a feeling of usefulness can keep us feeling alive, alert, and healthy. For a person whose sixth house is emphasized, unhappiness in work often takes a toll on health, and when work conditions change for the better, health tends to improve, too. The same is also true during times in my clients' lives when an outer planet like Saturn or Neptune travels through their sixth house. As work stresses and frustrations increase, health concerns tend to arise.

Our attitudes toward work and our day-to-day job functioning are also shown by the sixth house and any planets in it. Take Saturn in Virgo in the sixth house, the house of

work habits and relationships with coworkers. The best qualities of that position are careful, capable, reliable work habits and craftsman-like attention to detail. The worst

qualities are hypercritical, judgmental, self-righteous attitudes toward fellow employees, even assuming the role of an exacting, disapproving judge.

The sixth house is quite profound, and the clue to using it well is to find work that is deeply fulfilling. When people whose sixth house is strong (especially when the Sun is there) feel happy and satisfied in their daily work, they tend to stay well, feel good about themselves, and generally enjoy life. When they feel stuck, unfulfilled, and unproductive in their jobs, they are miserable and often develop health conditions. On an unconscious—or even a soul—level, these illnesses are primarily a means of getting out of the job or line of work that has become hateful. Thus when I see clients with a strong sixth house (especially when transits are triggering it), I counsel them to seriously look for a vocation that would meet their deep need to be productive and useful so they can stay healthy. If need be, they should make sacrifices to train for fulfilling work.

The premise that inner states and attitudes produce outer experiences is particularly true when dealing with health concerns. Psychosomatic and alternative medicine practitioners are increasingly applying the basic principle of metaphysics—i.e., that the mind governs physical health. Physical problems often have an emotional component and express conflict or tension. Practitioners of medical astrology have an excellent tool for avoiding or alleviating illness through deciphering and resolving underlying conflicts—both those shown in the sixth house and in other parts of the chart.

For example, take a person who has Uranus or the sign Aquarius in the sixth, suggesting the possibility of an impediment in the circulation⁴. Underlying this blockage is restlessness and nervous tension brought on by a feeling of being restricted in the workplace. In many cases, this is a false belief system arising from "shoulds" and "shouldn'ts" we were taught as children. By pursuing work that entails more freedom to move around—by understanding why restriction by authority feels so intolerable—the psychosomatic circulatory problem can be relieved.



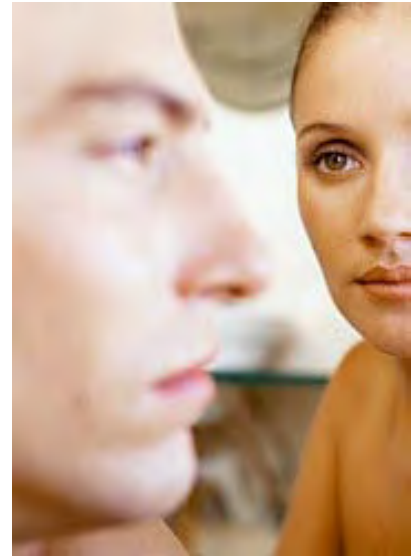
Evidence to back up this work-health connection comes from the statistics on hypertension, an illness often associated with Uranus in the sixth. African-Americans historically have had less freedom of choice in their work than Caucasians, and it is only improving slowly. In all age groups, this group has more high blood pressure than whites, but it is most striking in the years 55-64, where hypertension affects 48% of black men, 36% of white men, 35% of black women, and 29% of white women.⁵

⁴ Vocational implications of Uranus, Neptune, and Pluto in the sixth, tenth, or second houses are considered in depth in Donna's ebook, *The Outer Planets and Inner Life, Volume One: The Career Path of the Exceptional Soul*, published 2004 by Moon Maven Publications. For more information, visit <http://www.moonmavenpublications.com>.

⁵ Statistics taken from the *Hypertension Handbook*, by Merck, Sharp, and Dohme, 1974.

The Seventh House

The seventh house describes how we function in close, intimate relationships such as marriage—the areas most important to Venus and to Libra, which are associated with this house. "Surely," you may be thinking, "this is where your theory goes wrong. It is up to the other person whether he loves me and wants to be close to me." That is indisputable; yet we seem to single out people who fit our unconscious beliefs and needs, healthy or unhealthy. Some people are married repeatedly but always to someone who turns out to fit one basic pattern, no matter how dissimilar they seem on the surface. A woman with an alcoholic father often has one relationship after another with men she discovers are alcoholics. Even within the realm of dating, single people can find patterns in the people they date—especially among those who treat them badly.



If you despair of ever finding a happy relationship, such a pattern may be operating. Only when underlying needs and motivations are faced and dealt with can you experience a different kind of relationship. Look at the sign on the seventh house, the planets within it, and the condition of its ruler to see what less-than-conscious patterns and needs your intimate relationships may be expressing. For instance, individuals with Mars and Uranus conjunct in the seventh may repeatedly get involved with unstable and even volatile partners. Such individuals need to express more of their own unconventional nature and give themselves more freedom. They would then have less need to choose partners who act these needs out for them.⁶

My astrology teacher Richard Idemon pointed out that another cause of seventh-house problems is the discrepancy between the first house (the Ascendant or Rising sign) and the needs shown in the rest of the chart. The sign on the cusp of the seventh house (also called the Descendant) is the opposite of the sign on the first; thus, we attract the opposite of what we put out. Your way of coming across (as described by the first house) attracts some people and turns off others. As noted while discussing the first house, your rising sign or Ascendant may not be the real you at all, but merely the tactics you adopted as a child to get along. Thus, when you attract people on the basis of your first-house facade, you may be drawing people who do not meet your basic needs at all, and so you are often frustrated with your relationships.

Analyzing the first-seventh axis can throw light on these patterns. Let's take a few examples. Capricorn rising results in Cancer on the seventh cusp. A person with Capricorn rising acts strong and adequate and so might attract someone with unmet dependency needs—a Cancerian or lunar type. Pisces rising puts Virgo on the seventh. If you have Pisces rising, you might sometimes act vague, confused, disorganized and helpless, even if these qualities aren't true of you. When acting that way, you would be likely to attract a Virgo or Virgo-type

⁶ Donna's ebook, *The Outer Planets and Inner Life, Volume Two: Exceptional Soul Seeks Same* contains an entire chapter devoted to Mars-Uranus aspects. For more information, visit <http://www.moonmavenpublications.com>

person who would relish the idea of making you over and bringing order into your life.

To return to our example, let's suppose that you have Capricorn rising but are a Pisces Sun with strong dependency needs of your own. Through the Capricorn Ascendant, you attract dependent people who can't take care of themselves, leaving you unhappy because you want to be taken care of yourself at times. When you realize that your Capricornian facade of never needing help is turning away those who might otherwise be glad to aid you, you can begin to show some of your needs and have them met. The first house-seventh house axis in our charts deserves thought, as analyzing it can help us understand many of our difficulties in relationships, from the most casual to the most intimate level.

The Eighth House

The eighth house, most closely aligned with Pluto and Scorpio, has a number of seemingly unrelated meanings that are integrally related if we look deeply. For one thing, it has to do with the finances, resources, and values of other people we are closely connected to—a mate, family member, or even a business partner. The eighth house is opposite the second house, which represents our own resources, finances, values. This opposition shows the need to achieve a balance between what is ours and what belongs to others, keeping healthy boundaries between the sets of resources and working on the give and take balance in our dealings with others.

Two key eighth-house functions are sex and regeneration; psychological observation seems to confirm that they belong together. Therapists and theorists, particularly of the mind/body/spirit school, feel that consistently reaching orgasm can release a blocked-up energy flow, regenerating you physically and mentally.

A thorough analysis of your eighth house is a key to understanding your own sexual nature. Your difficulties, attitudes toward sex, and those conditions that turn you on can be seen through this house, including the sign on the cusp and any planets it contains. This is another area where astrology can help you find your true self as apart from the strictures imposed by society.

For instance, if you have Aquarius on the eighth (an unexpected facet of the Cancer rising personality), then what turns you on will not be traditional or "respectable" but something modern and unusual. It is important to know that it is society's inhibitions rather than your own that result in this disapproval. The fact that society as a whole hasn't caught up with you needn't keep you from being fully expressed sexually, providing that no one else is hurt in the process. However, disapproval may wound that sensitivity typical of Cancer rising people, sometimes resulting in an Aquarian detachment from eighth house matters such as sex

The eighth house is the house of regeneration, and the sign and planets there show what regenerates us. There are, of course, ways of regenerating yourself in addition to sex. People don't take the need for regeneration seriously enough, and thus many people are chronically fatigued. You need to work at regeneration just as seriously as communication, marriage, or any of the other areas of life. Richard Idemon pointed out that the eighth house is quincunx (150°) the first, so what regenerates you is something quite different from your day-to-day activities. The eighth house in your chart can teach

you ways to regenerate yourself, and you can then turn to those activities more consciously and purposefully. The person with Pisces on the eighth house cusp, for instance, might find going to the movies or the seashore quite helpful. The person with Aries on the eighth might be renewed by vigorous exercise or by physical labor on a project, like building something. The person with Taurus on the eighth might find it refreshing to garden or raise houseplants. Plan your next vacation around your eighth house and you may get much more out of it than usual!

The eighth house is also known as the house of death and rebirth, and here again attitude is crucial. Every apparent death is a rebirth, whether it is the death of a person, a phase in your life, or your own death. If you fully trust that death is only an illusion, that no door closes without another opening, then death will be a different experience for you than for the person who does not have this kind of trust. If you have the sign Cancer on the eighth, for example, you may hang on too tightly to that person, that phase of your life, or life itself, and thus prevent or unnecessarily delay the rebirth.

The Ninth House



The ninth house, which is related to Jupiter and Sagittarius, concerns the search for wisdom and knowledge. While it is said to govern higher education, our learning and growth can't be limited to the college years or to those with a college degree. Many self-educated people are wiser and have more depth than others with a doctorate. The signs and planets involved with this house also show how you approach the workings of the higher mind—theory, abstract ideas, and philosophical questions.

For example, the person with Scorpio on the ninth may have a powerfully analytical mind, capable of going deeply into abstract ideas. The person with Gemini on the ninth, in contrast, might approach it in a lighthearted, eclectic, and occasionally superficial way (unless there are planets in the house to modify this). They would be quick to grasp ideas but just as quick to discard them for all those shiny new ones as they come off the press.

On the other hand, the Scorpio on the ninth person might be dogmatic, rather prone to extremes, and have difficulty trusting others with their deepest thoughts, while someone with Gemini on the ninth adapts to new input, communicates well and would be an enjoyable teacher. Neither sign is better than the other. There is room in this world for all kinds of thinkers, because we all have our own particular role in raising the level of consciousness of the human race.

The ninth house also represents your lifelong struggle to discern what you believe

about the world, God, humanity, and life—roughly, your philosophy of life and your faith or religion. We all need something to believe in, and the ninth house in your chart shows what that is. Astrologer Jesse Portis Helm said that the ninth shows the area in your life where you will find spiritual fulfillment.

People with Taurus on the ninth, for instance, might find it in nature and in working with the land—this is what brings them close to God. Their philosophy would be a practical and even conservative one. Those with Pisces on the ninth cusp or Neptune placed in it may connect with God while sitting by the ocean, listening to elevating music or exploring the sacred dimensions of dance. These individuals would be very mystical and emotional in their religion. Especially early on in their spiritual quest, they might have trouble knowing what to believe because they might alternately be fooled by false teachings and then disillusioned. Later, as they learn to open up their own inner ear to spiritual guidance, they would discover the truth for themselves on their own personal path.



Your philosophy of life is much more than an abstraction. It can guide your approach to life, to situations, and to other people. It probably even determines the way you vote! You may find it helpful to examine your ninth house in order to clarify and verbalize your philosophy of life more consciously. What is your outlook on life, and how does it influence the way you live? Our premise all along has been that inner beliefs determine outer realities, and if so, the ninth house has a great influence on all the rest of the houses and on your entire life experience.

The Tenth House

Arguably the most important house cusp is the tenth house cusp, also known as the [Midheaven](#)⁷, the career point at the top of the chart. Among the most powerful points in the horoscope, it is determined by the precise time and place of birth, and it changes by a degree every four minutes. The degree that cusp occupies is so sensitive that transits or progressions to that point can correlate with profound changes in our career and status in the world. Both the sign on the Midheaven and any planets that aspect that point are powerful career indicators.

The tenth house, which is related to Capricorn and Saturn, is connected with your reactions to authority in all its forms—not just your parents' authority, but all those in authority over you throughout life. In practice, the latter grows out of the former. That is, three employees could experience same boss in three different ways, depending on how experiences with their parents conditioned them to perceive the boss's behavior. They could conceivably have three different Midheavens, or, since the Midheaven describes

⁷ Midheaven: The cusp of the tenth house, the career point at the top of the chart, among the most powerful points in the horoscope. It is determined by the precise time and place of birth and changes by a degree every four minutes, and is so sensitive that transits to that point can correlate with profound changes in our career and status in the world. Both the sign on the Midheaven and any planets that aspect that point are powerful career indicators.

the career, similar Midheavens with different aspects to it or different planets in the tenth house. Our **perception** of the authority figure is as important as the kind of person the boss may actually be. If we unconsciously expect the boss to be punitive, we will behave in ways that ultimately cause the boss to become punitive—a scenario that can persist through endless job changes.



The relationships between your attitudes toward authority and your potential for success are also quite profound. If you are either too rebellious or too timid and compliant, your chances for success are less than someone who can deal with authority figures in a reasonable, responsible and balanced way.

Furthermore, your attitude toward authority carries with it your attitude toward becoming an authority figure yourself. If you are

uncomfortable with your own authority, you may not move very far along the road to success until you resolve that discomfort. Many people hit a snag in their career at the point where they have to assume a position of authority over others. And, yet, most people in high positions—or successful businesses of their own—need to take on a managerial or supervisory role and have employees under them.

The tenth house, in totality, shows how you would function in a position of authority, and is logically connected with your original authority figures, your parents. We live what we learn, and this makes it hard for us to be different from authority figures we experienced as children. We consciously or unconsciously use our parents as role models, including the way we raise our own children or behave when we are in a position of authority. As mature adults, most of us assume a position of authority at some time in our lives. The role of parent is probably the single most authoritative role possible, in view of the actual power involved and the omnipotence children attribute to parents.

Many of those who embrace alternate lifestyles and who are disenchanted with empty materialism can't relate to the idea of a career at all, and so perhaps we need to come to a deeper understanding of the tenth house. It can represent what we are trying to achieve and the ultimate impact of our lives on the world around it. Some people with Pisces on the Midheaven or with Neptune in the tenth, for example, may not appear successful or competent in worldly terms because their goals may be otherworldly and mainly spiritual in nature.⁸ A study of the tenth house, the Midheaven, and all the aspects to it can give each of us clues to that perplexing question, "What is my life purpose?"

⁸ For an in-depth exploration of Neptune, Uranus, or Pluto in the tenth house or in other vocational sectors of the chart, see Donna's ebook, *The Outer Planets and Inner Life, Volume One: The Career Path of the Exceptional Soul*, published 2004 by Moon Maven Publications. For more information, visit <http://www.moonmavenpublications.com>.

The Eleventh House

The eleventh house, related to the sign Aquarius and the planet Uranus, deals with a number of concerns; let's focus here on its relationship to friendship and groups. Both can either be helpful to us or hold us back, so it is important that we integrate them well into our lives. For teenagers, friendship and the peer group can seem more important than family influence, future goals, or consequences of their actions. Getting in with the wrong crowd has ruined many lives. On the other hand, groups of friends often support and inspire creative people or those who are trying to change society for the better. Rightly used, friendship can be a great source of support; wrongly used, it can be quite destructive.

Good friends are rare gifts who encourage and strengthen us. Sometimes, however, the opposite is true: people you thought were your friends do not appear happy or are even actively jealous when you succeed. Friendship is based on equality, but false friends want to hold you down to their own level. Many peer groups discourage you from standing out as an individual and exert pressure to conform to their ways, no matter how stultifying or nonproductive. The eleventh house is opposite from the fifth house, and the opposition always indicates the need to achieve balance between two poles. The lesson of the eleventh is to learn to maintain a happy medium between the human need for friendship and affiliation (eleventh) and the need for self-development and creative self-expression (tasks of the fifth).



Group membership is similar to friendship in its positive and negative potential. Self-help groups like Alcoholics Anonymous and Weight Watchers stand behind members and help them develop. However, many people use group membership to run away from developing themselves and to stifle their creativity gifts—the eleventh detracting from the fifth. Some people spend much of their time as officers and committee members, going to endless meetings where nothing happens but talk. Our affiliations can waste time and dissipate creative energies unless we learn to make a positive selection of friends who encourage us and who are seeking to develop themselves in similar ways.

The sign on the eleventh, planets within it, and position of its ruler are clues to understanding your needs and difficulties in the areas of groups and friendship, as well as to seeing what strengths and help they can supply. Some people lose from friendship until they learn to use the signs and planets connected with the eleventh in a positive way. The person with Saturn in the eleventh, for instance, may feel sad, lonely, and hopeless of ever having good friends while chasing after the local jet set, but will gain strength, wisdom, and the respect of peers upon finding more serious companions, often those who are older. The individual with Pluto in the eleventh might wind up a loner because "you can't trust anybody." Plutonians' bad experiences, however, can in part be self-created. Perhaps they are too possessive or play subtle power games with their friends, or they go at people too intensely with the idea of making them over. There are few real

victims —look carefully at the ways people contribute to or even subconsciously arrange unhappy experiences.

The Twelfth House

Each of the houses contains endless wisdom and insight, and one chapter—or even a book—could not begin to explore all of it. Nowhere is this more true than with the misunderstood and much-maligned twelfth house, traditionally called the house of secrets and sorrows. We will concentrate here on the twelfth house concerns of repression and self-undoing, for what we keep secret from ourselves often causes us the most sorrow.

Repression is a defense mechanism whereby unpleasant and unacceptable thoughts, experiences, needs, fears, and wishes are forced out of the conscious mind and into the unconscious. Sometimes, due to the unacceptable nature of the material, suppression is so quick and habitual that we are not consciously aware of it. Repressed feelings do not go away; they continue to rumble around in the unconscious and foment trouble.

Self-defeating behavior of various kinds generally derives from repressed material. Pisces and

Neptune are both associated with the twelfth house, and both have a strong propensity for denial and self-deception.

Repression is connected with the twelfth house. The sign on the twelfth cusp and any planets in it can show us what kinds of emotions, needs, and past events we are likely to repress. You might even go so far as to say that the twelfth could show you the wellspring of your neurotic behavior. "Self-undoing" is a term often used by astrologers in connection with the twelfth. It refers to the ways you undermine yourself. The sign and planets in the twelfth plus the position of its ruler can show you how you are your own worst enemy.

The twelfth has good and positive aspects, too, but the more energy you expend trying to suppress emotions or hide parts of yourself, the less energy is available for the positive expression of twelfth house energies. Uncovering, examining, and dissolving your bondage to the secrets and sorrows of the past can free you to develop the spiritual side of this house.

Let's look at one example of how the twelfth house energy can be diverted from self-destructive to constructive use. A client with Leo rising and the Sun in Leo in the twelfth was in a bind when it came to ego. The Sun in Leo, Leo rising, and the ruler of the Ascendant (i.e., the Sun) in Leo all point to a person who wants to be the center of attention at all times. Yet with this crucial Sun in the self-effacing twelfth house, we get an individual who was taught that it is bad to want attention. How, then, will the hungry Lion get fed? In the person's tempestuous twenties, it was through self-destructive ways of getting attention--psychosomatic illnesses that necessitated being physically taken care of, using drugs, and getting into dramatic predicaments and crises that called for a rescue. With maturity and quite a lot of therapy, some of the neurotic self-destructive urges were



resolved, and the person began seeking attention in more positive twelfth house ways, gradually becoming a spiritual teacher.



I don't want to leave you with the impression that the twelfth is a negative house, because it has great power for good when we learn to use it constructively. In one of his beautiful analogies, Rod Chase points out that at sunrise the Sun comes up over the Ascendant and then travels through the twelfth house. This means that when we shine our light on the hidden truths of the twelfth, a new spiritual awakening will dawn. It may shine on materials hidden in

the unconscious and on hidden spiritual teachings. The twelfth house is connected traditionally with institutional settings and with the chronically ill or unfortunate. Thus, that rising sun may also shine on people hidden away in hospitals, nursing homes, institutions, or prisons who need our help. At any rate, the positive use of twelfth house planets is to shine that light for ourselves and others.

We have only begun to tap into the wealth of insights and understandings a study of the houses in our birth charts can give us. They work on many levels from the most mundane to the deeply spiritual. Don't neglect them in your quest to understand yourself and others through the astrological chart.

HOW TO ANALYZE ASTROLOGICAL ASPECTS


READER ALERT: With this chapter, we plunge still deeper into the technical end of astrology, and so some of you who are newcomers may want to put this book aside until your studies are more advanced.

Aspects are the key to many areas of astrological interpretation. The zodiac is a 360° circle, and angles formed between two planets in that circle—like 30°, 60°, or 90°--are called aspects. For instance, if Jupiter is three signs and about 90° away from Neptune, then Jupiter and Neptune are considered **square** to one another. The effect of an aspect is to blend the energies of two planets together in a way that modifies the way they both function. Coffee is always coffee, but Starbucks is counting on your knowing that with steamed milk it's a different drink than plain black coffee. Aspects are like that.

The type of connection formed between the planets in an aspect is determined by the nature of the angle—for instance, a square (90° angle) is generally considered a stressful aspect, while a **trine** (120° angle) is generally harmonious. Aspects greatly modify the way a planet is expressed and are an important key to understanding not only the birth chart but compatibility between people (chart comparison), current events in one's life (transits or progressions) and other important applications of astrology. The **cheat sheet** on the next page is a summary of the major aspects we'll work with in this chapter.

There are astrology texts that interpret each planet in all possible aspects to each other planet. Nonetheless, if you rely primarily on books to analyze aspects, you'll be stuck with memorizing interpretations by a variety of experts, and you won't develop confidence in your own ability. What I'd like to teach you is to analyze the aspect first, and then, if need be, look it up in a reference book to verify your work. Hopefully, this chapter will give you tools to begin that type of analysis. Another drawback to relying on interpretations in a book, no matter how good it may be, is that the sign and house of each planet in the pair have to be considered, and no book can encompass that much material. Moon in Scorpio square Jupiter in Aquarius will be very different in nature from Moon in Sagittarius square Jupiter in Virgo, yet books can only give you a general interpretation of what it means to have the Moon square Jupiter¹.

Basic Meanings of the Major Aspects


 **Conjunction:** Perhaps the strongest aspect occurs when two planets are standing next to one another within an 8-10° range—they are considered conjunct. Most often, they are in the same zodiac sign and the same house of the chart, though not always. Conjunctions powerfully modify the qualities of planets in signs, because they merge the two planets' energies to work together as a unit. Take a conjunction between Mars and Neptune in Virgo. Mars in Virgo can be a neat freak, but is hardly orderly if it's conjunct foggy, hazy Neptune—the ruler of Pisces. Mars in Virgo

¹ The process of analyzing aspects covered briefly in this chapter is done in a far more expanded form in Donna's hardcopy book, *How to Read Your Astrological Chart: Aspects of the Cosmic Puzzle*, published in 1999. Available from Red Wheel/Weiser, 1-800-423-7087, or on the internet at: <http://www.redwheelweiser.com>.

cheat sheet of astrological aspects

© 2004 by Donna Cunningham

Here in summary form are the major astrological aspects. An aspect is an angle formed between two planets in our solar system, merging the energies of the two planets and forcing them to operate together.

 **Conjunction:** A conjunction is formed when two planets stand close together in the zodiac, say within a range of 0-8 degrees. In most cases planets in conjunction are also in the same house and sign, and so they operate in a similar manner (same sign) and are focused on the same area of life (same house). They are blended together in a way that makes them lose their separateness.

Sextile: (60° or two signs apart.) Complementary elements are usually involved in the sextile—water with earth and fire with air. Planets in sextile, then, can complement or enhance each other in some ways, each one filling in something the other lacks. **Signs that are Sextile to one Another:**



Aries: Gemini, Aquarius	Libra: Leo, Sagittarius
Taurus: Cancer, Pisces	Scorpio: Virgo, Capricorn
Gemini: Aries, Leo	Sagittarius: Libra, Aquarius
Cancer: Taurus, Virgo	Capricorn: Scorpio, Pisces
Leo: Gemini, Libra	Aquarius: Sagittarius, Aries
Virgo: Cancer, Scorpio	Pisces: Capricorn, Taurus

Square: (90° or three signs apart.) Squares represent two urges or needs in a head-on conflict. Squares are the energizing forces within a person—the needs that drive them on.



Signs that are Square to one Another:

Aries: Cancer, Capricorn	Libra: Cancer, Capricorn
Taurus: Leo, Aquarius	Scorpio: Leo, Aquarius
Gemini: Virgo, Pisces	Sagittarius: Virgo, Pisces
Cancer: Aries, Libra	Capricorn: Aries, Libra
Leo: Taurus, Scorpio	Aquarius: Taurus, Scorpio
Virgo: Gemini, Sagittarius	Pisces: Gemini, Sagittarius

Trine: (120° or four signs apart.) Planets in a trine are usually in the same element—e.g., from water sign to water sign or from air sign to air sign. Since they have many similar traits, needs, tastes, preferences, and abilities, the two planets enhance each other and do not create resistance or friction. They work together cooperatively for the same ends. **Signs that Are Trine to one Another:**



Fire signs: Aries, Leo, Sagittarius
Earth signs: Taurus, Virgo, Capricorn
Air signs: Gemini, Libra, Aquarius
Water signs: Cancer, Scorpio, Pisces

The quincunx (150° or five signs apart) This aspect usually involves two signs that are absolutely at odds with each other and therefore are difficult to reconcile. There is no natural connection between the signs. **Signs that are**



Quincunx one Another:

Aries: Virgo, Scorpio	Libra: Pisces, Taurus
Taurus: Libra, Sagittarius	Scorpio: Aries, Gemini
Gemini: Scorpio, Capricorn	Sagittarius: Taurus, Cancer
Cancer: Sagittarius, Aquarius	Capricorn: Gemini, Leo
Leo: Capricorn, Pisces	Aquarius: Cancer, Virgo
Virgo: Aquarius, Aries	Pisces: Leo, Libra

Opposition: (180° or six signs apart.) Signs opposite each other are compatible in two ways: they are in complementary elements and operate in the same modality (cardinal is opposite cardinal and so on).. When used properly, opposite signs complement and fulfill each other. **Signs that are Opposite one Another:**



Aries and Libra, cardinal fire and cardinal air
Taurus and Scorpio, fixed earth and fixed water
Gemini and Sagittarius, mutable air and mutable fire
Cancer and Capricorn, cardinal water and cardinal earth
Leo and Aquarius, fixed fire and fixed air
Virgo and Pisces, mutable earth and mutable water.

alone can be critical of others in a fairly aggressive way, but conjunct Neptune, it is far more compassionate. Some folks with this Mars-Neptune combination are psychic Sylvia Browne, beloved comedienne Carol Burnett, and singer, Willie Nelson.



Planets that are conjunct are also generally in the same house and sign, and so they operate in a similar manner (same sign) and are focused on the same area of life (same house). They are blended together in a way that makes them lose their separateness. Whether a conjunction is “good” or “bad” depends on whether the two planets are basically friendly and harmonious toward one another. (Mercury and Jupiter are simpatico; Mars and Saturn are not.)

A conjunction is a powerful aspect, and when you have several planets in your chart strung together in a series of conjunctions, it is even more powerful. Two or more planets out of the ten in the chart are acting out of the same space, and, as one of my students said, “That’s a lot of volts coming out of one area of the zodiac.”

Let’s analyze another conjunction involving the planet Neptune: Mercury and Neptune standing together in the sign Libra. Mercury is communication, while Neptune is intuition, but also haziness and confusion; thus the person may have good psychic ability, but needs to work on communicating in ordinary spoken English. Mercury is writing and thinking, Neptune is creative, and Libra is concerned with beauty; so this might be a poet or novelist. On the most negative level, Mercury has to do with words rather than morality and Neptune can signify deception; so worst case scenario, we might have a swindler or a garden-variety liar. As in all chart analysis, in order to conclude what level a conjunction like this is operating on, you’d need a sense of the rest of the chart and the person’s spiritual development. We also consider how the aspect is being expressed at this stage of the person’s life, since we all have the opportunity to learn and grow in the course of living.

AstroDataBank Examples: The following notables with Mercury and Neptune conjunct in Libra demonstrate the wide variety of ways Mercury-Neptune conjunctions can be expressed: singer Julio Iglesias, fantasy and horror writer Stephen King, journalist and Kennedy clan member Maria Shriver, rock musician Bruce Springstein, Indian saint Ammachi, and astrologer Brian Clark.

The Importance of the Elements in Understanding Aspects: We have touched briefly on the four elements in other chapters, especially in talking about the nature of the Moon signs. The elements are a key to understanding several of the aspects, because the harmony—or lack of it—between the zodiac signs of both planets in the aspect tells much about the way the two planets will work together. Briefly, based on a medieval system, the twelve zodiac signs are divided into four elements—fire, earth, air, and water.

Think about these elements as they appear in nature. Fire and air work well together (air is needed to keep a fire burning, and fire warms up cold air), but they do not work so well with water or earth (water or earth will put out a fire. Water and earth

complement each other—no crops would grow without both of them—but they do not work so well with fire and air. The fire signs are Aries, Leo, and Sagittarius. The earth signs are Taurus, Virgo, and Capricorn. The air signs are Gemini, Libra, and Aquarius. The water signs are Cancer, Scorpio, and Pisces.

Signs that are Sextile to one Another:

Aries: Gemini, Aquarius
Taurus: Cancer, Pisces
Gemini: Aries, Leo
Cancer: Taurus, Virgo
Leo: Gemini, Libra
Virgo: Cancer, Scorpio

Libra: Leo, Sagittarius
Scorpio: Virgo, Capricorn
Sagittarius: Libra, Aquarius
Capricorn: Scorpio, Pisces
Aquarius: Sagittarius, Aries
Pisces: Capricorn, Taurus

✳ **Sextile: (60° or two signs apart.)** Complementary elements are involved in the sextile—water signs with earth signs or fire signs with air signs. Planets in sextile can complement or enhance each other, filling in some quality the other lacks. The earth sign Taurus, for instance, lends practicality to the water sign Pisces' other-worldliness, while Pisces' ability to flow and bend with conditions can offset Taurus' stubborn resistance to change.

In practice, I pay little attention to sextiles—maybe because the people who have them don't pay much attention to them either. When I point out the talent a particular sextile brings, the client's reaction is often, "Oh, that." It's the taken-for-granted gift that the person often fails to make much use of—not something dynamic that they are impelled to mobilize and hone to a fine perfection.

There are even cases where two planets in sextile can bring out the worst in each other. Take Mercury in Aries sextile Jupiter in Gemini. This combination includes a fire sign and an air sign, so an Aries-Gemini combination could literally be hot air. Geminis have a million and one ideas but can be more talk than action, while Aries have trouble finishing all those projects they start. Put the two together, and as fast as Aries gets going on one project, Gemini has dreamed up another one just as fascinating; the two in combination might not get much done.

Or, take a Virgo-Scorpio combination: both signs can be critical, perfectionistic, overly-analytical, and want to make others over in their own image. Put the two together, and you've probably got someone with an eagle eye for everyone else's flaws and no hesitation in pointing them out. All sextiles don't have to bring out the worst qualities of the two signs, but I do feel the sextile's beneficial effects are rather overrated.

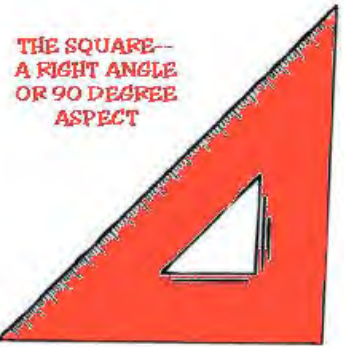
Signs that are Square to one Another:

Aries: Cancer, Capricorn
Taurus: Leo, Aquarius
Gemini: Virgo, Pisces
Cancer: Aries, Libra
Leo: Taurus, Scorpio
Virgo: Gemini, Sagittarius

Libra: Cancer, Capricorn
Scorpio: Leo, Aquarius
Sagittarius: Virgo, Pisces
Capricorn: Aries, Libra
Aquarius: Taurus, Scorpio
Pisces: Gemini, Sagittarius



Square: (90° or three signs apart.) Squares—signs at right angles to one another—represent two sets of urges or needs in head-on conflict. Their bad name in astrology is not entirely deserved. Squares are energizing—they represent conflicting needs and urges that motivate us to achieve a result. People with many trine and sextile aspects in their charts but few squares often lack motivation to achieve their considerable potential.



Actually, conjunctions can be more difficult to express positively than squares, if the planets in question work together in an undesirable way. The conjunction is a merging of planets so complete that the individual may not even question whether the two energies should be one. A square, however, brings a level of discomfort that drives the individual to find a solution to the conflicts between the two signs, houses, and planets involved. With the conjunction, the undesirable condition is present constantly and the person has difficulty in visualizing any other outcome to their efforts. With the square, the back and forth pull is intermittent, alternating so it is easier to conceive of a positive result and the person is more able to mobilize inner resources in a new way. The square is dynamic, while the conjunction can be stagnant. The energy blockages seen with Mars square Neptune, for instance, may be easier to work through than those seen with Mars conjunct Neptune because Mars is freer to take action in a square.

An example may make these ideas clearer. Suppose someone has Venus—the planet of love—in Aries in the fifth house square Mars—the planet of conquest—in Cancer in the eighth. The fifth house represents the romance of courtship, while the eighth represents a more direct sexual approach, such as you might see in a longer term partnership. Venus in Aries in the fifth indicates that the person is very romantic, the type to be forever pursuing some new conquest. However, having Mars in Cancer in the eighth might mean that our subject is insecure sexually, with sexual performance often dependent on ever-changing moods, thus resulting in a great fear of rejection. The combination of this Mars and this Venus could make for a puzzling Don Juan type who conquers but then doesn't go through with it.

If you had this aspect, how could it be made more comfortable? At least try conquering some shy but sensitive Cancerian who would understand your moodiness and insecurity and would adore helping you to get over your shyness. Ah, but you say, the Cancer would cling and make your Venus in Aries claustrophobic. Well, then you'd need to program some freedom into the relationship; work at making the person feel so secure about your love that your flirtations are no threat. That devoted Cancerian back home with dinner in the oven can even become a marvelous excuse for why you can't follow through with that divine flirtation you've been pursuing all evening. So that no one gets hurt, only flirt with others who enjoy it as a sport, but who don't take it seriously.



How would you go about resolving the tensions in a square and making them easier to live with? Imagine that instead of two planets, there are two children vying for your attention. If you give them equal attention and assure both of them they are important to you, then neither will feel so slighted that they have to act up. It is hard

to make both happy in one sitting, because they are so different. If Johnny knows Billy is having time with you now but he'll have time with you later, he'll be more cooperative.

Say, for instance, you have Sun in Taurus square Moon in Aquarius. You have to find a way for both of these factors to be integrated into your life before you can be at peace. The Sun in Taurus wants stability and security, but what about the Moon in Aquarius' need for freedom and non-conformity? If both sides of the square were fully expressed, you might be the insurance salesman who is a weekend biker or you may find some other arrangement that allows both sides of your nature to be fulfilled. Maybe you have a gas-hogging RV that you and the family take on long trips during your vacations. It is important not to make a judgement that says one or the other side of the square is "bad" and that you shouldn't want or need to be like that. Suppression of one side of the conflict tends to escalate the discomfort.

AstroDataBank Examples: Famous people with Sun in Taurus square Moon in Aquarius include British Prime Minister Tony Blair, director George Lucas, race car driver Dale Earnhardt, and actresses Jessica Lange and Uma Thurman.

Signs that Are Trine to one Another:

Fire signs: Aries, Leo, Sagittarius

Earth signs: Taurus, Virgo, Capricorn

Air signs: Gemini, Libra, Aquarius

Water signs: Cancer, Scorpio, Pisces

Trine: (120° or four signs apart.) When two planets form a trine, they are usually in the same element—e.g., from water sign to water sign or from air sign to air sign. For instance, planets in the water signs Cancer, Scorpio, Pisces may trine one another.

Since signs in the same element have many similar traits, needs, tastes, preferences, and abilities, the two planets enhance each other and do not create resistance or friction. The two planets work together cooperatively for the same ends. With a trine, there is an effortless sense of flow and ease.

Take a trine in air signs, such as Moon in Libra and Mars in Gemini. The people-oriented air signs have in common a need to communicate and to connect with numbers of people. The Moon in relationship-oriented Libra can produce a romantic who is in love with love and not happy alone. Mars in verbal Gemini puts prodigious energy into socializing, communicating and conquering with words. The two together can produce a charmer who needs people and knows exactly how to win them over. The energies of the two planets act harmoniously, and the person has an easy time fulfilling these needs.

The catch is that if things are too easy for us, we tend not to work hard at them or to achieve much with them. Too many trines or sextiles in a birth chart can lead to laziness. People with a Grand Trine (planets in all three signs in one element, all in aspect to one another) often have many abilities and many advantages falling into their lap, but may lay back and do little with all that potential. People with T-squares and Grand Crosses (patterns full of difficult aspects) generally achieve far more because they are more driven. You will see the truth of this if you study the charts of people who have accomplished a great deal.

The quincunx (or inconjunct): (150° or five signs apart.) While many texts relegate the quincunx (a.k.a. inconjunct) to the status of a minor aspect, in my years of consulting experience, that rule is not true. This holds true whether the quincunx is in the natal chart of the individual or is formed by a transit. **The aspect involves two signs that are absolutely at odds with each other and therefore are difficult to reconcile.** There is no natural connection between the signs, unlike the trines, which have their element in common, or the squares and oppositions, which are at least in signs that are similar in their mode of operations (e.g. cardinal or fixed.) Here are the signs, paired with their two possible quincunx signs. for instance, a planet in Aries may form a quincunx to a planet in approximately the same degree (plus or minus two-three degrees) as planets in either Aries or Scorpio:



Signs that are Quincunx one Another:

Aries: Virgo, Scorpio	Libra: Pisces, Taurus
Taurus: Libra, Sagittarius	Scorpio: Aries, Gemini
Gemini: Scorpio, Capricorn	Sagittarius: Taurus, Cancer
Cancer: Sagittarius, Aquarius	Capricorn: Gemini, Leo
Leo: Capricorn, Pisces	Aquarius: Cancer, Virgo
Virgo: Aquarius, Aries	Pisces: Leo, Libra

Using the table above, find quincunxes by starting with the sign of the faster-moving planet. In order of their average speed, they are first the Moon, then the Sun, and then Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune, and Pluto. Thus, in any aspect between the Moon and Jupiter, the Moon is faster, since it will generally move around 12° per day, while Jupiter will move, at the most 7° per day.



There can be considerable tension—and considerable growth—when an individual has a quincunx, either natively or by transit. The dynamics of this aspect are a force to be reckoned with in the person's life, either as a source of great originality or irritation, depending on how it is used. Analyzing the planets, signs, and houses involved in the aspect can help the individual find healthier ways of dealing with the conflicts between the two planets.

For instance, Leo and Capricorn are quincunx signs and truly make an odd couple. Leo is extremely social and extroverted, while Capricorn is reserved, not inclined to trust people, and introverted. Leo is generous to a fault, and Capricorn is thrifty (should we say tight?). Both Leo and Capricorn want recognition and power, it is true, but Leos believe they were born to rule and can be highly insulted if you expect them to earn their throne, while Capricorn knows you have to climb the mountain step by laborious step. Leo wants life to be constant sunshine, and gloomy Capricorn is bound to rain on Leo's parade. An example of a celebrity born with Sun in Leo quincunx Moon in Capricorn is Arnold Schwarzenegger. He climbed that Capricorn mountain three different ways in the course of a lifetime—first as a body builder who won both the Mr. World and Mr. Universe titles, next as a Hollywood superstar, and finally as the governor of California.

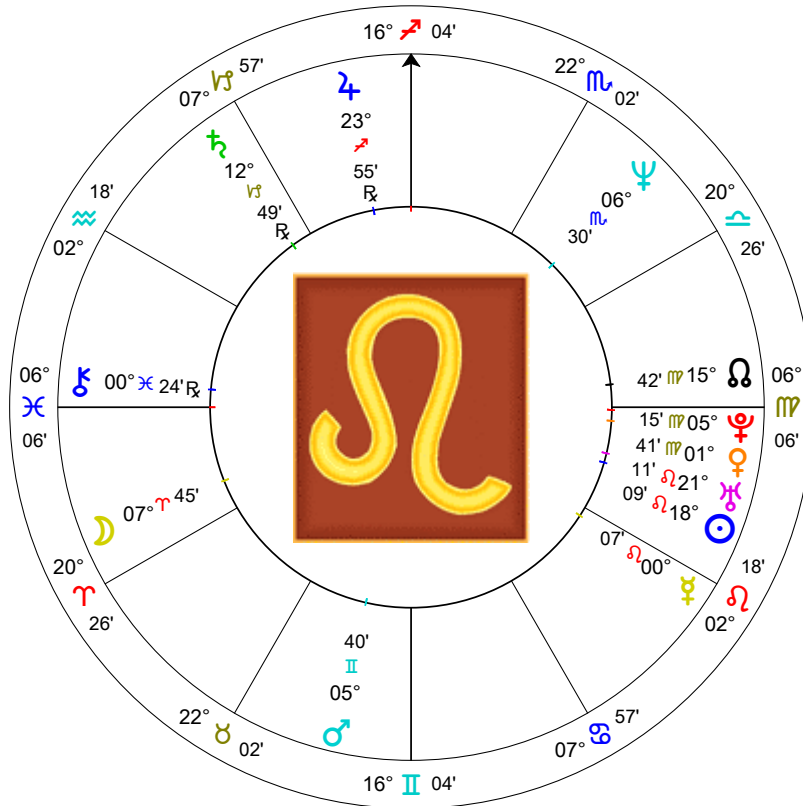
antonio banderas

August 10, 1960

9:00 PM CET

Malaga, Spain

04W25; 36N43



With the quincunx, tension is generated that often requires a dynamic and creative solution. The emotional expressiveness and operatic genius of Luciano Pavarotti is in part due to the power of his Aries Moon quincunx Neptune in Virgo. Woody Allen's off-beat humor is partly explained by his Mercury in Sagittarius quincunx Uranus in Taurus; he pokes fun at the establishment in gentle ways. Rap star turned successful actress Queen Latifah owes part of her sultry appeal to the quincunx of Pluto in Libra to her Pisces Sun. The need to reconcile two planets that are quincunx creates tension that spurs people on creatively.

The quincunx also involves house matters that are difficult to reconcile, so don't forget to consider the houses when you're trying to analyze a quincunx. For instance, combining the fifth house with the tenth has you trying to mix business with pleasure. The third house blended with the eighth has you trying to do paperwork while you've got loving on your mind. The second house mixed with the seventh has you looking for a millionaire to marry. Some people manage some of these things sometimes, but it's a stretch.

A Poster Boy for the Quincunxes: If you are advanced in your studies and inclined to do some additional work with this aspect, you might like to take a look at a chart with many quincunxes, that of simmering movie idol Antonio Banderas². You might even call him a poster boy for this aspect, because he has so many that they form two triangular configurations called, the **Yod**, or, alternatively, the **Eye of God**, or **Finger of Fate**. In the Yod, the dual tensions of the two quincunxes, coupled with the sextile for ease, can propel the person to extreme solutions for all those irreconcilable needs—even to greatness.

One of Antonio's Yods consists of his Moon in Aries in the first house, and Mars in Gemini in the third, both sextile one another but quincunx Neptune in Scorpio in the eighth. The second consists of Neptune in Scorpio in the eighth and Pluto in Virgo in sixth, to Aries Moon in the first. To understand a Yod goes far beyond the scope of this book, but you can begin to understand the dynamic tensions that may drive Antonio to stardom by analyzing each of the quincunxes in the picture separately and then try to imagine them all operating at once. Daunting!!! Far from immobilizing him, however, the sheer numbers of such aspects in his chart may be part of what gives him charisma.

Signs that are Opposite one Another:

Aries and Libra, cardinal fire and cardinal air
Taurus and Scorpio, fixed earth and fixed water
Gemini and Sagittarius, mutable air and mutable fire
Cancer and Capricorn, cardinal water and cardinal earth
Leo and Aquarius, fixed fire and fixed air
Virgo and Pisces, mutable earth and mutable water.

Opposition: (180° or six signs apart.) The opposition is another aspect that has been given a bad name in astrology, but that can have positive effects. The signs opposite each other are compatible in two ways: they are in complementary elements (fire is opposite air and earth is opposite water) and they operate in the same modality

² According to his AstroDataBank record, Antonio Banderas was born August 10, 1960, at 9:00 PM CET, in Malaga, Spain, 04W25; 36N43. This birth information is rated AA, from the birth record.

(cardinal is opposite cardinal and so on). Being face to face across the circle of the zodiac, planets in opposite signs create a certain ability to see both sides of a picture and to gain perspective on the self. When used properly, opposite signs can complement and fulfill each other's needs. (In Asian nations, traditional matchmakers would arrange marriages between people of opposite signs, born within a year of one another.)

Let's look at some examples of how opposite signs can support one another. Cancer loves taking care of people, even when nobody asked them, and its opposite sign, Capricorn, wants to be cared for but would never admit to it; both signs are strongly motivated by security. Gemini's love to ask questions, and natives of the opposite sign, Sagittarius, think they know all the answers; both enjoy mental pursuits and the quest for knowledge. Aries wants to lead and Libra is looking for a leader; both need someone else in order to fill the complementary role. In all three cases, both signs fulfill needs the opposite sign has.

When the planets at the two ends of the opposition alternate in their actions, there is give and take like two children on a teeter-totter. When both ends stubbornly insist on their own way, the game changes to tug-of-war, and you reach an impasse. That's when an opposition means trouble. Rightly used, this aspect requires the development of cooperation and mutuality and the ability to see things from another's point of view. It is said that if you lack oppositions in your chart, you have a harder time being objective.



Suppose that you have Saturn in Capricorn and Jupiter in the opposite sign, Cancer. Saturn in Capricorn is all business, while Jupiter in Cancer is oriented toward home and family. If the two sets of needs aren't allowed to coexist in harmony, the person could be homesick while at work and preoccupied with job worries while at home. If both needs are given their due, the result is a balanced individual who is able to function effectively in two very different but related realms.

Another opposition would be Moon in Pisces opposite Mars in Virgo. Pisces is creative, but would like to drift and dream, while Virgo wants to work endlessly on fine details. By alternating, you have both inspiration and perspiration...the two requirements of genius. Both of these signs are *mutable*, meaning that they adapt readily to changing circumstances and to people and situations in their environment. Two successful performers who have this combination yet who are better known as supporting players than as leads are actress Kathy Bates and the bandleader and the sidekick of David Letterman, Paul Schaeffer.

A Right-Brain Approach to Astrological Aspects³

Getting a handle on patterns that are common among people with various

³ This section and the table of celebrities is an excerpt from my ebook, *The Outer Planets and Inner Life, Volume Two: Exceptional Soul Seeks Same*. You can order a copy from <http://www.moonmavenpublications.com>.

aspects is a subject worthy of long study. As one learning aid, have a look at the table on the next page. It lists notables with particular outer planet aspects to Venus, comparing them side-by-side with other notables with related aspects⁴.

You'll learn a systematic method of analyzing aspects in the section that follows, but for now, just notice your immediate response when you think about the people in the table. I should stress that this method does not constitute a scientific approach, nor is it research of an objective nature. The choices are subjective, in that people on the lists were selected from several hundred examples in AstroDataBank. I chose those few because they seem to capture my observations of people with a given aspect in over three decades of clinical work with astrology clients. The result is impressionistic, attempting to evoke key qualities of these aspects. As my college German professor used to say when struggling to explain linguistic subtleties, "You have to **FEEL IT!**"

What we are aiming for with these lists could be called a Right-Brain approach to astrological aspects—intuitive, impressionistic, and experiential, not logical, analytical, and cerebral. This approach ultimately creates a kind of visceral understanding of differences between the various aspects. Memorizing cookbook descriptions of aspects takes you part of the way in learning astrology, but you can't really master astrology by rote. ("You have to FEEL IT!")

Begin by directing your mind to attune to the qualities of the planets in question—for instance, with Venus aspects, focus your attention on the celebrities' sense of style, what makes them attractive and gives them appeal, and their way of relating. If we were working with Mars aspects instead of Venus aspects, you'd tune into how these individuals deal with Mars concerns like energy, going after their wants and needs, their sexuality, their competitiveness, and how they deal with anger.

The table lists people born with Venus aspects to Uranus, Neptune, and Pluto. In the first column, going down the page, you will find famous people with Venus conjunct Uranus, then Venus square Uranus, then the trine, then the opposition. By reading down that column, you will begin to sense certain similarities between these people. The second column lists celebrities with Venus aspects to Neptune, again the conjunction, square, trine, and opposition. Column three shows the range of aspects between Venus and Pluto.

As you look at the table, don't analyze what you see there. Clear your mind and just look at the names, bringing the celebrities to mind as vividly as possible. (If you don't know some of them, just pass them over, since there are enough names that you will recognize to get the flavor of an aspect.) Go to the next name, and the next, and the next, not stopping to analyze them as yet. In fact, if you can let go of analyzing for now, you'll be surprised at how much you learn by soaking up the comparisons in the table.



⁴ The sources of these notables are twofold. Most are from AstroDataBank, with its amazing research capabilities that make it possible to generate lists of notables with various aspects in just seconds. The other major source is the Information Please Almanac online biography collection at <http://infoplease.com>.



COMPARISONS—VENUS ASPECTS TO EACH OUTER PLANET, WITH CELEBRITY EXAMPLES

VENUS-URANUS: VENUS-NEPTUNE: VENUS-PLUTO:

Conjunctions:

Tom Cruise	Richard Gere	Antonio Banderas
Michael Jackson	Matt Damon	Sean Penn
Kathy Bates	Meg Ryan	Raquel Welch
Scott Hamilton	Bill Clinton	Simon Cowell
Richard Simmons	Dr. Bernie Siegel	Dr. Phil McGraw

Squares:

Russell Crowe	Nicolas Cage	Jack Nicholson
Angelina Jolie	Pamela Anderson	Goldie Hawn
Tyra Banks	Whitney Houston	Britney Spears
Elvis Presley	Tina Turner	Justin Timberlake
Princess Diana	Camilla Parker Bowles	Ted Turner

Trines:

Ron Howard	Tom Hanks	Dennis Franz
Denzel Washington	Benicio Del Toro	John F. Kennedy, Jr.
Carmen Electra	Geena Davis	Lucy Liu
Elton John	Willie Nelson	Ricky Martin
Dennis Rodman	Ilia Kulik	Michael Jordan

Oppositions:

Lorenzo Lamas	Michael J. Fox	Ted Danson
Sharon Stone	Liza Minelli	Glenn Close
Queen Latifah	Stevie Wonder	Elvis Presley
George Foreman	Venus Williams	Philippe Candeloro

(Notables with Venus in aspect to the conjunctions of Uranus-Saturn,
Pluto-Saturn, Neptune-Saturn, or Pluto-Uranus not included.)

From: The Outer Planets and Inner Life, v.2: Exceptional Soul Seeks Same
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 Data from AstroDataBank and
 Information Please Almanac

Read down the columns, taking in the names one by one. You may get a feeling for the qualities that people with the various Venus-Neptune aspects share, as well as how the four major Venus-Neptune aspects are similar. You may begin to sense, from the lists, how the conjunction differs from the square, and how they both differ from the trine. You may not be able to put it into words, but possibly you can sense the motives and behavior patterns of these various aspects. In column three, consider the qualities shared by Venus-Pluto people. Again, you'll get a much clearer picture in the chapters on those aspects, but here we are going for a feeling of they have in common.

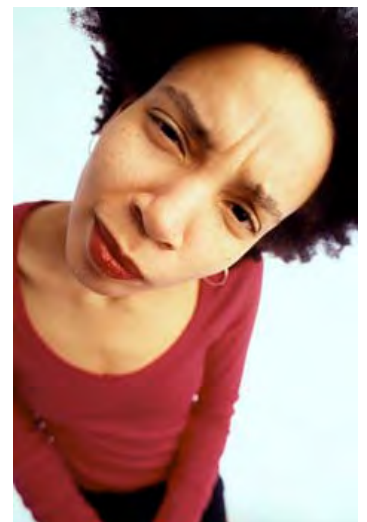
Scanning the columns across the page, compare people in similar fields who were born with each of the three outer planet aspects to Venus. You may start to grasp how a Venus-Uranus aspect differs from a Venus-Pluto aspect and how they each differ from a Venus-Neptune aspect. You may not be able to put these perceptions into words yet, but perhaps you intuit something about the differing motives and behavior patterns of these outer planet aspects to Venus.

For instance, in the self-help/self-improvement category, note that psychologist Dr. Phil McGraw has Venus conjunct transformative Pluto, while metaphysician Dr. Bernie Siegel has Venus conjunct mystical Neptune, and fitness coach Richard Simmons has Venus conjunct eccentric Uranus. Among the rock stars, Britney Spears has Venus square Pluto, Whitney Houston has Venus square Neptune, and Prince has Venus square Uranus. Willie Nelson has Venus trine Neptune, while Ricky Martin has Venus trine Pluto, and Elton John has Venus trine Uranus. Note how much more over the top the celebrities with Venus/Uranus aspects (Simmons, Prince, and Elton John) are than the more simmering Venus/Pluto aspects (Britney Spears and Ricky Martin). Even though we're only looking at single aspects at this point, there ARE qualities that distinguish between these groups.

Steps in Analyzing Aspects

Many students of astrology feel at sea when confronted with two planets in aspect. Aspects are complex, and the only way to make them understandable is to break them down into parts, analyze the parts separately, and then combine and synthesize them. First, work on understanding each of the planets separately. Think about the planet's basic nature (e.g., the connection of Mars with anger, competition, and sexuality), and how that planet is altered by its sign and house position. Mars in Virgo, for instance, is very different from Mars in Gemini. Mars in Gemini might use pointed—even a tad sarcastic—humor to express irritation, while Mars in picky Virgo might become highly critical about small details that fall short of perfection.

The house position shows the major focus of a planet's energy, so do consider the houses in analyzing an aspect. Mars in the twelfth house is focused on very different kinds of activities than Mars in the tenth. Mars in the tenth house aims for success and recognition in the career, while Mars in the twelfth can put the same amount of energy into more private ends such as spiritual development and service. Using the descriptions from the chapter



on houses, consider the interests and areas of life that each of the pair of planets might pursue, and speculate on how those interests might either complement or detract from one another.

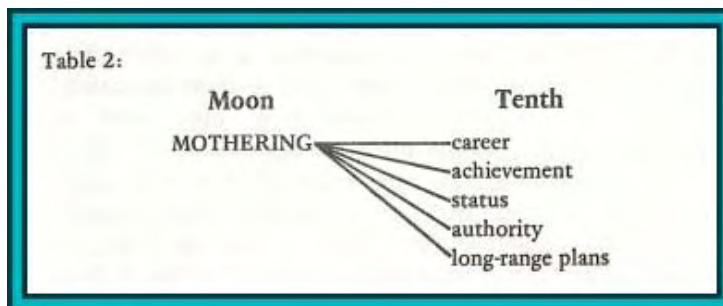
The process of doing this sort of analysis has several stages. First, find the meaning of the first planet in the pair, considering its sign and house. Then do the same for the second planet in the aspect. It may help to write both sets of meanings down in table form. Then begin combining the two planetary energies, the two signs, and the two houses involved. Finally, synthesize all the separate parts to see how they work together.

An example may make the process clearer. Suppose a chart shows Moon in Aries in the tenth, trine Mars in Leo in the first. To analyze this aspect, you might first want to make a table of the meanings of the Moon, the tenth house, and Aries, like the one below:

Table 1:

Moon	Tenth House	Aries
mothering	career	independent
women	achievement	energetic
security	status	aggressive
emotions	authority	competitive
dependency	long-range plans	fresh, vital
moods		always seeking the new

Next you'd combine each of the meanings of the Moon with each of the meanings of the tenth house. In the table below, I've taken just one of the Moon's key meanings—mothering—but to get a full understanding of the Moon in the tenth, you'd do the same steps with each of the matters the Moon represents. (That would include our emotions, what it takes to feel emotionally fulfilled, what things make us feel secure, what our homes are like, our relationship to food, and all the other meanings you learned about in the earlier chapter on the Moon.)



What picture emerges from this match-up? Here are some of the possibilities:

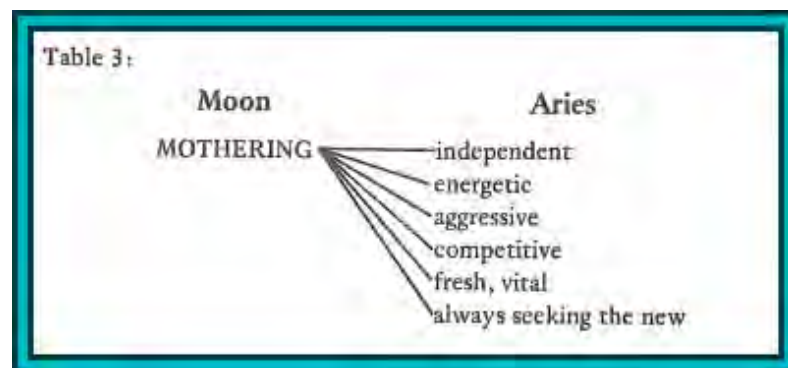
- 1) To combine **mothering and career** suggests the individual had a working mother and

also that the individual's own career might involve taking care of others in some way.

- 2) To combine **mothering and achievement** suggests the mother was capable and also perhaps that she pushed the individual to achieve, being more nurturing and responsive when the child was successful.
- 3) The combination of **mothering and authority** can produce an authoritarian mother—or, certainly suggests that the mother was the primary authority figure for this individual.
- 4) **Mothering combined with long-range goals** indicates a mother who could plan ahead and slowly work toward accomplishing some goal; the individual learned this trait also and can apply it to life.

Putting all these elements together would give us an individual who has a great need for accomplishment and status, and who had a driving, ambitious mother. (In many ways, Moon in the tenth is like Moon in Capricorn, the sign naturally connected with the tenth house.) People with the Moon in the tenth house found in AstroDataBank include Celine Dione, supermodel Naomi Campbell, the Bush twins, computer genius Bill Gates, actor and director Ron Howard, and British Prime Minister Tony Blair.

Moving ahead with our analysis of this aspect, but sticking with the mothering function of the Moon, let's see what we learn by matching it with the sign Aries, as in the table below:



The picture that emerges is of a mother who was aggressive and competitive, who pushed the child to be independent, who worked hard, but with a constantly changing focus. Hardly the type to develop serenity and security in the child, right? Combining the meanings of the Moon in Aries and the Moon in the tenth suggests a mother who was career and status oriented, who was authoritarian and fairly aggressive about it, and who was too wrapped up in her own goals and drives to allow the child a normal amount of dependency. As a result, the individual also can become driven to achieve, a competitive person who may even be using the arena of career to out-do the mother. People with Moon in Aries include Antonio Banderas, Whitney Houston, Martina Navratilova, Marlon Brando, and Heather Locklear. Combining the two factors we have analyzed so far, an AstroDataBank search shows three notables with Moon in Aries in the tenth house: singer Celine Dion, computer mogul Bill Gates, and supermodel Tyra Banks.

We have learned a great deal from working with just one of the key meanings of the

Moon—mothering. Looking back on Table 1, there are a number of other critical functions the Moon plays in our lives. To get a fuller understanding of the characteristics of people with Moon in Aries in the tenth, you'd make links between each of the meanings of the Moon, each of the meanings of the tenth, and each of the meanings of Aries.

Briefly, let's look at some possible combinations. The Moon represents emotions and security, while the tenth depicts the career, and the sign Aries is generally independent and energetic. Putting the three elements together (Moon in Aries in the tenth house) would give us an individual who feels insecure unless working hard at a career. Career is a very emotional area in the life—never "just a job" but instead a major area of emotional fulfillment and satisfaction. Since the mother discouraged dependency in the child, the adult can have a conflict between dependence and independence that makes relying on others feel unsafe. For such an individual, it is safer to rely on the accomplishments hard work has brought. Many more layers of meaning can be found in putting all these elements together, but for that, you'll have to rely on yourself!

The second planet in the aspect was Mars in Leo in the first house. Below is a table with the key meanings of this placement:

Mars	First House	Leo
independence	outward personality	regal
energy	first impressions	passionate
competition	self-expression	self-involved
self-assertiveness	first years of life	life-affirming;
sexuality (conquest)	physical body	pleasure-loving
	appearance	generous
		sunshiny, warm
		vain, proud

To get a full picture of this Mars placement, you'd proceed through the same steps that we followed with the Moon. For the sake of brevity, however, let's scan the three columns. Mars in Leo in the first house produces a strong personality, a fiery, dramatic, self-assertive person who loves having a good time and plenty of attention. Here is a proud, competitive person who can be quite aggressive. Nonetheless, the pride, dignity, and warmth of Leo can keep Mars from being too sharp and hostile. Leo is a mellow sign that tempers the aggression of Mars. All in all, however, I'd say Mars in Leo in the first is an individual you can't push around. Famous people found in AstroDataBank with Mars in Leo in the first include Vice-President Al Gore, financier Donald Trump, guru Ram Dass, and newsman Peter Jennings.

The full aspect that we have been putting together step by step is Mars in Leo in the first trine Moon in Leo in the tenth. Table 5 lists the meanings of both planets plus the ways that the trine aspect modifies the two planets.

Table 5:

Key Meaning of Aspect

Moon in Aries in the tenth trine Mars in Leo in the first

Moon	Tenth	Aries	Trine	Mars	First	Leo
mothering	career	independent	ease of expressing	independence	outward	regal
women	achievement	energetic	mutual	energy	personality	dramatic
security	authority	aggressive	enhancement,	aggression	first	passionate
emotions	long-range plans	competitive	flow of energy,	competition	impressions	self-involved
dependency		changeable	wisdom, under-	self-assertiveness	self-expression	generous
moods			standing,	sexuality	physical body	life-affirming
habits			learning from		appearance	pleasure-loving
			experience		first year of life	sunshiny, warm
						vain, proud

Try doing match-ups between the various columns to see what combinations you can find. For instance, the Moon represents what it takes to feel secure. Matching that with the tenth house, you get an individual whose sense of security comes from career achievements. Since the Moon is in Aries, those career achievements would be pursued energetically and with a good deal of independence. Mars in the first would show someone who was energetic and self-assertive and not afraid to show that to others, yet because it is in the sign Leo, these traits would be demonstrated in a rather regal and life-affirming way, yet with an overly-dramatic flair at times.

Putting several of the elements in this trine together, we come up with a winner, an individual who has many of the traits needed for success: ambition, energy, drive, competitiveness, and long-range planning. The trine helps the individual's boundless energy (Mars in the first) channel itself productively into the career (tenth). The Leo in the first/Moon in the tenth combination makes for a person who is naturally seen by others as an authority and a person to respect.

The drawback of this marvelous-sounding aspect is that it can definitely be too much of a good thing at times—the aggressiveness can be overwhelming to others. Such people may be too intent on their own goals to see the effect they have on others. They may become driven in their careers but might not leave enough time for personal and social development in other areas of life.

This analysis has been a rather long process, and one that you may not need or want to undertake with every aspect that piques your interest. However, if you are stuck on analyzing an aspect and feel you can't possibly understand what it means, these steps and stages can be useful. As you get more experience in astrology, the process goes on automatically in your head, without the need to write it down.

A final consideration in analyzing aspects is in understanding that the same aspect can work on various levels, from the most concrete and material to the deepest psychological and spiritual. For instance, I found an aspect in my chart that explains why I have never had many electrical appliances in my home, but the same aspect also had extremely profound implications that clarify my relationships. One part of astrology's fascination is that you continue to gain deeper and deeper insights into yourself and those you care for as you go along.

"Afflictions" and "Bad Aspects"⁵

Astrology students are fond of bemoaning the "bad aspects" in their charts. "My Venus is afflicted, so I'll never find love." "If Saturn weren't square my Mars, I could do so much more." "This Grand Cross is killing me! What karma I must have to deserve it!" This is a cop-out use of astrology—putting the blame on your aspects rather than yourself. The chart only describes you and your character, rather than being some malevolent fate outside yourself controlling you.

If your Mars is "afflicted", it might merely indicate that you are a person who deals with anger in unhealthy or inappropriate ways. Rather than giving up, you should be looking to the chart to tell you what you need to work on in dealing with anger. You can learn a great deal about what makes you angry and why, ultimately defusing a few of your hot buttons. You aren't being put upon by karma, you are only being shown—or even pushed toward—the road to a healthier, stronger and more vibrant life style.

Difficult aspects, natally or by transit, are often the challenges that drive us to accomplishments, that mobilize us to change, and that keep us from settling into inertia. Likewise, adversity in life—the outward manifestation of difficult aspects—pushes us toward worthwhile achievements and personal growth. For instance, the loss of a child to a disease like muscular dystrophy has spurred the founding of several national child health organizations. Though the experience itself was tragic and painful, the end result was positive and constructive. Take a longer view of your bad aspects, and try to understand what strengths and accomplishments have come out of the discomfort these aspects produce.



who serve as mentors. Also, age helps bring out the positive side of this aspect—the person is a late bloomer, but matures gracefully and ages slowly, often finding the older years the happiest time of life.

The conjunction is perhaps the strongest Venus-Saturn aspect, because—as in every conjunction—the two planets are forced to work together and cannot exist separately. Some celebrities who with this conjunction who haven't done badly in the Venusian areas of attractiveness and appeal to the opposite sex are Denzel Washington, Nicolas Cage, Donald Trump, John F.



⁵ These ideas were explored more fully in my article, "Bad Aspects—The Big Cop-out," *American Astrology*, 12/75, v. 43:10, p. 25.

Kennedy, Jr., Ashley Judd, and Vanessa Williams.

Another point to consider with so-called bad aspects is that every planetary aspect, like every sign and house placement of a planet, has a positive and constructive use that you can put it to, if you study and discover it. For instance, I knew a woman with Mars in Aries quincunx Venus in Virgo who put a great deal of energy into organizing slum kids into baseball teams which her church sponsored, with good effects on all concerned. The more you can focus on the uplifting level of both of the planets in the aspect, the less energy you have left to devote to pursuing the negative consequences.

Making a Project of One of Your Tougher Aspects

If you have a "bad aspect" in your chart, draw the symbols on paper and pin it up on your wall and meditate on it intensely for a few months. Here are some ways to tap into the aspect and its expressions in your life:

Follow the Moon's transits over both planets in this aspect for several months to get a deeper sense of the emotions around it and the ways you act it out.

Track the ways it operates in your life, on many different levels from the trivial to the profound.

Journal about it. Conduct a dialogue with both of the planets involved to see what they'd like you to know about their purposes and needs.



Without passing the buck, look within yourself to find the part you play in the problems the aspect represents.

Make a list of concrete steps you can take to change what you're doing to create those problems.

Ask yourself what strengths or compensations you've developed as a result of the struggles you've been through with this aspect. (I call them side benefits—if you don't find any, you're not looking deeply enough!)

Think about the most positive possibilities of those two planets in their sign and house, and work toward achieving them.

Doing a process like this one with each difficult aspect in your chart over time will accelerate your growth and increase your happiness and self-confidence.

A SPIRITUAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE ON TRANSITS¹

In earlier chapters we dealt with each planet in the solar system and touched briefly on their transits. Without a thorough understanding of what a planet represents, first in general and then more specifically in the chart of that particular individual, you cannot understand that planet's transits. This chapter contains specific information about transits and their purpose in our lives. We will concentrate on transits by the slow-moving outer planets—Saturn, Uranus, Neptune, and Pluto—since they are powerful ones with lasting effects. Transits by the Moon, Mercury, Venus, Mars, and Jupiter last a few days or less and represent the small changes and activities of our daily lives, transient at best.

Transits by the Outer Planets



Transits by outer planets mark deeply meaningful periods in which we make adjustments and ourselves. Outer planet transits represent our relationship with our universe, the ones that lift us out of day-to-day, seasonal, vocational, and spiritual development.

Astrologers of the old school generally had a gloomy, fearful outlook on these transits, viewing the accompanying events or conditions as done to us by powerful, malevolent external forces. In the modern perspective, a transit by an outer planet is a challenge and an opportunity to grow and evolve. It

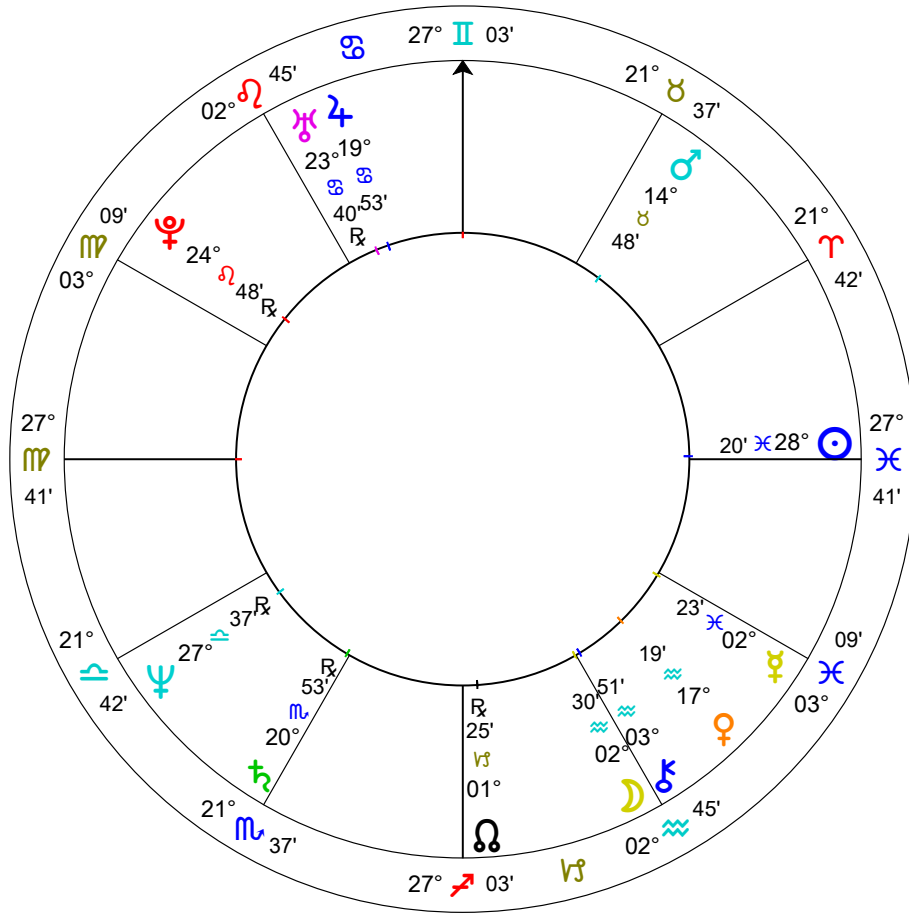
often exaggerates patterns represented by the same planets in our natal chart and brings the same old issues up for resolution all over again, so that we have to deal with them in a new way. By studying the chart, we can find out what the pattern might be and *work with* the transit rather than against it. Opposing change generally means having to learn the hard way, which can be exhausting and needlessly painful.

The outer planets move very slowly, yet long exposure to their energies is sometimes necessary because their lessons are difficult to learn. Pluto and Neptune transits to a natal position are the slowest—lasting as long as two years off and on—and are also usually the most challenging. They generally pass over the same degree of the zodiac three times, due to apparent retrograde motion².

¹ The greater part of this chapter originally appeared in Dell Horoscope Magazine, in the September and October, 1975 issues, as "A Spiritual-Psychological Approach to Transits." It is reprinted with their permission. © 1975 by Dell Publishing Co., Inc.

² Retrograde motion occurs at various times of the year with all of the planets in the solar system except the Sun and Moon. In these periods, which last several months for the slower-moving outer planets, a planet appears to be moving backward from our point of view. This is an illusion—it is on the opposite side of the Sun from the earth, and so while we are moving forward, it appears to be moving in the opposite direction from us.

BRUCE WILLIS
 March 19, 1955
 6:32 PM MET
 Idar-Oberstein
 Germany



This pattern of retrograde motion provides three important windows to grow in a particular area of life. People are often rather overwhelmed by the first crossover, working on the accompanying issues in a more focused way on the second passage, and, with diligent effort, resolving them on the third. The process of dealing with this new energy pattern goes on actively throughout the transit—and then, more internally, for many years, as we gradually adjust to the resulting changes in our situations and psyches.

How to Track Your Transits

Creating a list of chart placements in numerical order is a simple way to track transits. Sort the planets plus the Ascendant and Midheaven by degree number³, rather than by sign. Here is the list for Bruce Willis, whose chart is shown on the previous page, with birth information supplied by AstroDataBank⁴:

Mercury:	2° Pisces 23'	Uranus:	23° Cancer 40'
Moon:	2° Aquarius 30'	Pluto:	24° Leo 48'
Chiron:	3° Aquarius 51'	MC/IC:	27° Gemini/Sag 03'
Mars:	14° Taurus 48'	Neptune:	27° Libra 37'
Venus:	17° Aquarius 19'	Asc/Dsc:	27° Virgo/Pisces 41'
Jupiter:	19° Cancer 53'	Sun:	28° Pisces 20'
Saturn:	20° Scorpio 53'		

Looking at such a list, you might notice that several natal planets fall within close numeric range of one another. In Willis's chart, for instance, there are six planets between 23° and 28° of the various signs, and therefore that degree area becomes a "hot zone." This zone is especially sensitive during the several years in a row when one of the transiting outer planets is traveling between 23° and 28° of a zodiac sign, because that outer planet would aspect several natal placements in turn. Willis's life should be eventful when outer planets travel through those degrees—and, consulting his AstroDataBank biography, that has been the case in the course of his career and in his personal life. Conversely, note that he has nothing between 4-13° of the signs, and so a transiting planet would not be as strong an influence while in that range.

With the degree list you create for a particular chart, you can discover any hot zones. Using a reference book called an ephemeris or astrological software, you can then identify crucial periods when those zones are being activated. In following current astrological conditions while using this kind of list, you may see repeated transits by the same planet to one after another of natal planets that fall near the same degree. For instance, if you have several planets at around 3° of different signs, and this year's ephemeris shows that the current position of one of the slower moving planets is at 3° of

³ Degrees: The zodiac is a circle divided into 360°, and many of the more technical facets of astrological analysis are based on that division. Each of the twelve signs contains 30°, and each degree is further divided into minutes and seconds. Thus you may note that there is a planet in your chart at, say, 25° Aries 55'.

⁴ AstroDataBank lists his birth information as March 19, 1955, 6:32 PM MET, Idar-Oberstein, Germany, 7 E19; 49N 42. The data is rated A, from his memory.

a sign, you would experience its effects in several areas of life at once.

This sort of repeated influence forces us to learn a particular planet's lessons in a hurry. Transits by a particular planet seem to continue for as long as we still have something left to learn...and how easily we forget; so we often have to re-learn, like repeating a grade in school. We also may have to relearn the same lesson at different levels of awareness or in different areas or stages of our lives. Or, we might be having one last fling with a particular unwanted behavior pattern that isn't yet completely removed from our lives, in order to finally convince ourselves how uncomfortable that behavior makes us.

In summary form, the table below shows the range covered by each of the outer planets from 1990-2010. Compare those listings to the degree list for a given chart to identify years when significant transits would occur.

Transit Tracking Table for 1990-2010 (Rounded Off)

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Year:	Saturn:	Uranus:	Neptune:	Pluto:
1990	15-25 CP	5-9 CP	12-14 CP	14-19 SC
1991	25 CP-6 AQ	9-13 CP	13-16 CP	17-21 SC
1992	5-18 AQ	13-17 CP	16-18 CP	20-23 SC
1993	16 AQ-0 PI	17-22 CP	18-20 CP	22-25 SC
1994	27 AQ-12 PI	21-26 CP	20-23 CP	25-28 SC
1995	8-24 PI	25 CP-0 AQ	22-25 CP	27 SC-0 SG
1996	19 PI-7 AR	29 CP-4 AQ	24-27 CP	0-3 SG
1997	1-20 AR	3-8 AQ	26-29 CP	2-6 SG
1998	13 AR-3 TA	7-12 AQ	28 CP-0 AQ	5-8 SG
1999	26 AR-16 TA	10-16 AQ	1-4 AQ	7-11 SG
2000	10 TA-0 GE	14-20 AQ	3-6 AQ	10-13 SG
2001	24 TA-14 GE	18-25 AQ	5-8 AQ	12-15 SG
2002	8-28 GE	22-28 AQ	7-10 AQ	14-17 SG
2003	22 GE-13 CN	26 AQ-2 PI	10-13 AQ	17-19 SG
2004	6-27 CN	0-6 PI	11-15 AQ	19-22 SG
2005	20 CN-11 LE	3-10 PI	13-17 AQ	21-24 SG
2006	4-25 LE	7-14 PI	16-19 AQ	24-26 SG
2007	18 LE-8 VI	11-18 PI	18-22 AQ	26-28 SG
2008	2-20 VI	15-22 PI	20-25 AQ	28 SG-1 CP
2009	15 VI-3LI	19-26 PI	22-26 AQ	0-3 CP
2010	27 VI-14 LI	23 PI-0 AR	24-28 AQ	2-5 CP

Transits and Personal Responsibility

Folks who follow astrology are fond of moaning, "I went through a terrible time when Pluto crossed my Sun, but I'VE REALLY LEARNED MY LESSON!" These avowals of spiritual progress used to impress me, until I began to notice that many of the people who made such claims hadn't changed at all. They might avoid the original situation that caused them so much misery, but then they would plunge into a similar one that was just as self-destructive. I finally concluded that "I've really learned my lesson," was all too

often just a bit of karmic chic or a New Age way of saying, "How I've suffered!"

We make real progress in a long-standing and recurring pattern only when we carefully evaluate our part in the situation—why we got into it, what needs it met, where we made mistakes, and how such difficulties can be avoided in the future. Our potential for the future only truly changes when we learn from past mistakes. Blaming others rather than seeing our own role is a sign that we haven't really learned anything. Blaming the planets for our problems is another way of not taking responsibility for ourselves and the ways we contribute to our difficulties. We will transcend the past when we learn from it.

The notion that we are being buffeted by Uranus or held back by Saturn is shortsighted. As we've seen throughout this book, we attract events, conditions and people to ourselves because of our own inner conflicts, needs, beliefs, and attitudes, whether they are conscious or unconscious. Misguided patterns of thought and action are at the root of most of our self-created troubles. Start examining your thoughts, actions, and emotions in the more difficult areas of your life to see how you provoke the "mistreatment" you get from the planets.

Let's say that you've been overly self-indulgent in some way...like running up your charge accounts. Then Saturn begins transiting your second house—the house of money—and you have to pay...and pay...and pay. Do you really blame Saturn for your fiscal crunch? Or can you put the responsibility back where it belongs...on yourself and your ill-considered management of your finances? A productive way of using the same transit would be to get a grip on your spending patterns, perhaps starting by writing down exactly what you spend each day. As the picture of how your money is being spent emerges, you might use the positive Saturn principles of self-discipline and facing reality to make a more realistic budget through trial and error. You can capitalize on the 2 ½ year period that Saturn transits your second house, so that when Saturn moves on, your finances are less lavish but based on a sound foundation for the future.

For another example—suppose you hate your job and just can't pull yourself together in the morning, so you keep getting to work later and later. Then one fine day Uranus squares your Midheaven, and the boss lets you go. Do you blame that awful Uranus? How about blaming yourself for all the times you decided to sleep just fifteen minutes later? Don't pass the buck to the transiting planets. The responsibility for our lives as adults rests on our own shoulders. Saturn is called "the Reaper," but to some extent all the transiting planets indicate that you have to reap what you've already sown. If you've sown diligently, you'll doubtlessly reap the benefits.

During a transit to a difficult natal aspect, you may be faced with an all-too-familiar situation related to that aspect—perhaps the same types of gnarly difficulties that have cropped up time and again over the years in that particular area of life. Let's say that you have a natal Venus-Neptune conjunction, and a transiting planet is setting it off. One pattern related to that conjunction might be that in the past, you've gotten involved with one person after another who "coincidentally" turned out to have an addiction problem. The new transit might well bring another such heartbreaker into your orbit or else might represent a crisis in longstanding connections with one or more significant relationships that fit the old, dysfunctional pattern.



With the added asset of astrological awareness, however, you do now have the choice to stop relating in old ways by seizing the opportunity to explore the neurotic appeal of codependent ties and to heal the sources of such a painful pattern. Only then is there the possibility of a healthier relationship in the future. Without getting to the roots of the pattern, even if Prince or Princess Charming did magically show up, you'd take yourself and the same misguided strategies

along as you entered a new commitment. Before you knew it, that prince or princess would be croaking just like all the frogs that went before.

Studying our transits is a great stimulus to growth. They are an irreplaceable tool to help us become more conscious, insightful and evolved, as well as more aware of our usual responses to important challenges. Following transits intelligently and responsibly can bring any situation into focus and help you to analyze your part in it. A chart reading of current and upcoming transits can help you discover the right windows for taking action and can suggest sources of support and healing. Rightfully, the chart should be used for study rather than fortune telling. Transits can be understood as useful information, rather than as disruptions by malevolent external forces.

Transits as Process

Generally speaking, transits are not isolated events outside your control but instead reflect a inner psychological process. (Recall our discussion in the introduction of this book about why the stars are not to blame.) Too much attention was paid in traditional astrology to events and not enough to the processes that bring them about.

Actually, events are like signposts--more visible than the process, naturally, but when you're traveling, you don't jump from one town to the next, you cover the distance gradually. Thus it is with events in your life...you get there gradually via an internal mental, emotional, and spiritual process. Transit readings that focus only on events miss out on a potent tool for self-knowledge and change.

In doing a yearly reading for a client, I first try to get an idea of what has been going on in the past year because this helps illuminate the specific process indicated by a transiting planet. Let's say that Neptune began a long transit to a woman's Mercury last year and will continue into the coming year. I can list a number of Neptune-like processes that may be going on; but when the client pinpoints the specifics, our work together can be more useful because it clearly reflects how she is using Neptune at this stage of her life. More accurately, it indicates how she is *beginning* to use it because transits often show a *transition* to another, generally healthier, way of using a planet's energies.



With this kind of feedback, I relate coming transits to the specific processes already in motion to pinpoint when they might come to a critical stage and begin to be resolved. I can also point out ways of working more consciously with the processes if they are healthy for the person or more constructive channels for the planet's energies if they are not. Predictions made in this way may not be as spectacular as the shot-in-the-dark variety, but they are more organically related to the client's unfolding life—and in the long run, more useful.

Analyze some of the events of your life in terms of the processes that led up to them, and you will gain a great deal of insight. Let's go back to the example of being fired under a Uranus transit. You may have been restless and wanting to change jobs for a while (Uranus), so you developed progressively worse work habits that ultimately got you fired. Or you may have been going through a period of rebellion against authority (Uranus again), and you'd been pushing your luck pretty far with the boss. These are both Uranus-type processes that might lead to the Uranus-type event of getting fired.

To give another example, a couple I know have both been under heavy Pluto transits for some time. They have been through quite a bit of therapy during this period and now feel for the first time that they are ready for parenthood. Both therapy and pregnancy are Plutonian processes, but all the outside world will recognize is the Plutonian event—the birth of a child. The inner psychological processes, however, are what lead up to the actual outer event. Once again, we see the metaphysical truth that the person's outer world reflects and is created by their inner world.

It is helpful, too, to understand life as a process that you participate in and have some control over rather than as a series of unconnected events. Your participation may not be clear to you, as you may be sabotaging yourself unconsciously rather than consciously. The study of psychology is a useful adjunct to astrology because together they can serve as a guide to help you take better control of your life.

Events, then, may be the culmination of a process, but they can also be a catalyst that starts another process in motion. True, they can be quite painful; but it is often the painful situation that forces us to move beyond our comfort zone in spite of ourselves. Only the pinch of necessity moves us out of our inertia into changing our lives for the better. Without the surge of new energy that hard transits give us, we'd be likely to stagnate and to go on making the same mistake endlessly.

A destructive relationship, for instance, can drag on for years without either party having the will to break it off—until Uranus brings it to a head. Naturally, each is upset at the parting; but after a while, both are free to grow in ways the relationship prevented. Whether they grow or else hurry into another destructive relationship depends on their level of insight, but at least the freedom to grow is there.

If you will examine some of the events in your life this way, trying to retrace the emotional process that preceded them or followed them, you will see more clearly how such events are related to the actual course of your life. Seen in isolation, an event may appear to be a totally unprovoked disaster. Tracing the process, however, you can understand more of how you contributed to it and what its effects have been on your life as a whole. You may be surprised to find that the net result was actually quite positive, as in the case of many divorced or widowed women who relied too heavily on their husbands and who are now stronger and more self-reliant than they were before.

The Natal Chart — Key to Transits

My teacher, Richard Idemon stressed that you cannot understand transits unless you have a deep knowledge of the natal chart. The natal chart is the cosmic plan for our development, complete at birth but unfolding through transits. Different parts of us, different abilities and strengths, are developed at different times of our lives through our experiences. One part may not be able to develop meaningfully until another has reached a certain level of strength.

We may get tired of waiting for something we want or think the timing of an event was bad, but we can't see far enough ahead to grasp the whole plan. It is not *our* timing that is being followed but God's. It is a perfectly choreographed dance—Saturn waiting in the wings until Neptune has done its work, and so on. To understand a transit and its potentialities, we have to go deeply into the natal chart and examine the natal-chart function of both the transiting planet and the planet being transited.

For example, if Neptune is transiting your Mars, you have to take into account how both Mars and Neptune operate in your chart—by sign and house positions, rulerships, aspects, and general strength. The transit calls forth the conflicting problems related to these natal planets and makes you deal with them. It exaggerates certain tendencies and forces you to balance them out. Where something is comparatively weak in your chart, the transit acts as a booster shot to help you develop some strength. In other cases, it is like an overdose, bringing an already overly strong trait to a critical level where the person has to recognize it ("now that I have your attention") and to learn to deal with it in a more balanced way.

These ideas may become clearer if we use an example. Suppose a woman has Saturn and Pluto conjunct in the seventh house natively. This could express itself in picking steamy, brooding partners she thinks she can control and reform but who instead wind up controlling her. Such a pattern of choices makes her vulnerable to exploitation and to being hurt when her unrealistic hopes for these people collapse.

If transiting Saturn or Pluto aspected that conjunction, it would doubtlessly be a heartbreaking time: maybe an incident where such a choice of partners backfired. Just possibly, however, such an event might lead her to stop this behavior once and for all. Unless she used it introspectively though, she might go into another self-destructive situation, different on the surface but very much the same underneath.

A deep understanding of her part in the situation would be necessary before she would be able to make any real change. Totally innocent victims are rare, especially when you see a repeated pattern of such events in a person's life. She would have to recognize that such partners didn't "just happen" to her; she unconsciously selected them because they met her needs in some way that caused her to blind herself to their true nature.

Perhaps she got gratification from trying to "tame the tiger." Maybe these men unconsciously made her feel superior and like a very special person who would work a miracle with such people. If this woman fully understood her part in her disastrous



relationships and was willing to give up the gratification or find it in some less self-destructive way, she might be ready to select a different kind of partner.

This would be an example of using the transit to understand and transform your use of a natal aspect that has been a thorn in your side all your life. Any attempt to understand transits without turning to the natal chart and to the behavior patterns is bound to be superficial and not lead to constructive, enduring change. Even when an event is painful and appears destructive, the end result will be constructive if you use the energy to end a harmful pattern.

Some Thoughts on the Meaning of Pain

To make sense of transits—and, in fact, to make sense of life—we need to gain a deeper understanding of pain. Be it physical, emotional, mental or spiritual, pain is not always as bad for us as we think it is. Sometimes it is only a by-product of growth and change, and sometimes it is the only motivation that will get us back on the road to health.



I am not minimizing the pain that traumatic events or illness can bring—or even the emotional agony we go through during a long transit of a planet like Pluto or Neptune. We all suffer greatly at such times. Nor am I saying that pain is desirable, because it almost always signifies that some part of our physical, mental, emotional, or spiritual nature needs realignment. But pain is the proverbial cry for help; if we heed it, if we do something constructive about it, we can prevent further complications and enter a healthier time of our lives.

SOME OF THE DISCOMFORT MIGHT BE REGARDED AS "GROWING PAINS." Our bodies have amazing powers of adjustment; and this is true of our minds as well. The runner who consistently pushes to achieve greater speed or endurance may have aching muscles at first, but soon can reach that speed in every race without being exhausted. Pain often comes during the process of readjusting to a greater demand, but the organism grows to accommodate the demand. Soon the higher level of functioning actually feels normal to us. On the spiritual level, too, we may experience some pain as we try to stretch ourselves; but we soon function better than ever. It is often a hard transit that gives us the impetus to stretch ourselves—or provides conditions where we are forced to stretch ourselves if we don't do so voluntarily.

PAIN IS WORTHWHILE IF IT ACCOMPLISHES SOMETHING—like the pain you feel after an operation that repairs or removes something that has been draining away your health for

years. Psychotherapy, a tool often used under a Pluto transit, can also entail that kind of pain, as you purge emotions and motivations from your unconscious that have held you back most of your life. Facing up to facts you have suppressed can be painful, but it is often the only way to emotional health. The pain is temporary, but the result is long lasting.

From this point of view, a great deal of the struggle of transits is no more than a side effect of the process of strengthening, healing, and growing. The mistake is in focusing our attention on the pain rather than on the growth process. Concentrating on any kind of pain makes it hurt more; this is why the doctor gives a child a lollipop.

Sometimes in focusing on the pain, we don't see the growth at all—or we may see it in an upside-down fashion, perceiving growth as the side effect rather than the main purpose of the transit. "Well, I suffered terribly when my husband left me; but at least I learned to be independent." What is important is the new independence, not the suffering that served as a catalyst for growth. Consider periods of your life when you suffered a great deal; then find out what transit you were under; and trace what growth came of it. (If you have made a degree list for your own chart like the one for Bruce Willis, use the table of transits given earlier to find out what was going on astrologically at the time.)

PAIN CAN BE A WARNING SIGNAL: In the physical body, one of pain's useful functions is as a flashing red light—a warning that something is wrong. The same is true of our emotions. Many people don't pay attention to a physical or emotional problem until it begins to hurt. If discomfort moves you to take action to resolve the problem, it is a blessing in disguise because early action can prevent all kinds of what medicine calls "sequellae".

A Saturn transit to the Ascendant, for example, might accompany an illness or the unmistakable signs of aging, but Saturn did not cause this to happen. An illness might be the result of long-term self-neglect, such as eating the wrong foods or not taking care of yourself properly. If you call forth positive Saturn traits during the transit (traits like self-discipline and taking responsibility for yourself), the interval can help you get back on the road to good health. If you do not heed the warning, you are vulnerable to further deterioration of your health.

This applies to problems on the emotional or spiritual level as well. This same Saturn transit might indicate that anywhere you have not shown maturity and reliability in the past, others will be demanding that you step up to the plate and act your age. To find out who those others might be, look at the house Saturn inhabits in your birth chart. If it is in the fourth house natively, then family members—especially those getting on in years—may require you to take on more responsibility for the home. If it is in the seventh house natively, it may be your partner who is demanding that you assume your share of the expenses or work.

If you are hurt by an event but use it to analyze the part of your chart involved in the transit, you can begin to change the behavior patterns that bring on such events, avoiding worse problems in the future. With these new insights, the emotional pain has served a useful purpose, no matter how unpleasant it was.

PAIN IS SOMETIMES JUST A TEMPER TANTRUM: Some emotional pain is actually a

tantrum at not getting what we want when we want it. "Beware of your wishes" seems to be a wise saying indeed because many things we want desperately and agonize over not having might wind up being awful for us if we actually got them. Think back on some of the things you wanted with all your heart ten years ago and what your life would have been like if you'd achieved them.

When I was a senior in college, I can remember being depressed and humiliated because Columbia School of Social Work rejected me. I never thought for a moment how very difficult it would be for me as a naive, small-town midwesterner to adjust to New York City; I only knew that my dreams had collapsed. Several years later, when I actually did go to Columbia to finish my grad work, living in New York was still an overwhelming adjustment despite my greater age and experience.

There is always a valid reason why we don't achieve our dreams in the time frame we desire. The reason for having to wait will be clear to us later if we look for it. I believe there is some intelligence at work that is far wiser than we are, that knows what is good for us and what is not, and that can see far enough into the future to know the best time for events to occur. My experience with clients over the years has taught me that nothing unfolds before its time—and everything unfolds in its right time. As eastern philosophers say, "God's delay is not his denial."



PAIN OFTEN COMES FROM RESISTING CHANGE: Much of the pain of transits seems to come from resistance to change. We human beings are so hampered by our inertia and by fear of the unknown that any change seems like a calamity to us. When you resist change with all your might or continue in behavior you know is self-destructive, it is like knocking your head against the wall—needless pain. Then, too, if we don't work willingly toward change, events tend to happen that force revisions upon us. If we change voluntarily and work cooperatively with the transit, our experience is generally more productive and less painful.

Steps in Making Better Use of Tough Transits

The following are some suggested steps that, over time, will help you make the most of each transit that comes your way. I realize this is easier said than done. Yet, if you have followed my reasoning up to this point, you can grasp the logic behind these steps and imagine the dividends they would pay if you were able to put them to effective use.

Step No. 1: Get to know the planets well. Study all the planets in depth; know their positive and negative uses and the psychological processes involved. Examine all of them, but focus especially on the ones currently affecting you by transit. One method of doing this is to go over past events in your life and find out what transiting planets impacted

your chart then. If they occurred after 1990, you can make use of the transit summary given earlier to pinpoint the transits. Often more than one transit is involved in a significant event.

See how you have reacted to a number of transits by a given planet, such as a series of Neptune transits. You can't judge entirely from past transits by a particular outer planet, however, because they were affecting a different part of your chart then. Also, you were, hopefully, a different person then, having grown through your last contact with the planet. Ultimately, your deepest understanding of the planets will come from monitoring yourself during present and future transits by all the planets and to all the planets in your chart. That ever-evolving picture is one of the reasons people happily make astrology a life-long study.

Step No. 2: Get to know your chart in depth. Seek to understand the relevant parts of your chart and what they represent in your life at present. Know the positive and the negative levels of expression of each relevant house and sign placement and each aspect, both as you are now using them and in their greatest potential. Take inventory of yourself by asking questions like the following:

What chart features do I use in a constructive and self-affirming way?

Where am I living out the negative use of a combination?

How can I shift to more positive expression of these chart placements?

What strengths and abilities could I have that I haven't yet developed?

What is the real me and what have I allowed my your culture, parents, and other social pressures talk me into being?

Answers to these questions and more can be found in a deep analysis of your natal chart. A transit can bring out the best or the worst of a given aspect, depending on the current level of expression of the planets involved. Knowing the potentials of each part of your chart can help you know what constructive actions to take during a transit. In effect, understanding your natal chart profoundly puts you into the driver's seat.



Step No. 3: Take the long view. Try to foresee the results of the transit over the long haul; see the transits as TRANSITory. This will help you bear momentary pain and spur you to make better use of the opportunities while you still have them. During a transit, you may feel you are falling apart in some area; but you are often only integrating yourself on a deeper level and will be healthier than ever afterwards. You may just be realizing that certain matters are really not as important as you once thought them to be, and so you are unwilling to invest your energies in them any longer.

It may help to keep a journal of your innermost thoughts and feelings during heavy transits or a record of your dreams. Looking back on what you've written afterwards, you

can see the process more clearly than you do day by day or by relying on memory. It is like the growth of a pet or a child—so gradual that the people closest to it don't see it. Ask people who've known you for a period of time how you have changed.

Step No. 4: *Discard old notions in judging the effects of a transit.* Sometimes transits are only "bad" when judged by false concepts and values. Too often we evaluate what is happening from the standards of the masses rather than what is good for us personally in our current stage of development. Pluto transits, for example, often bring a desire to withdraw inward and think deeply about the self. From the standpoint of conventional wisdom, this is "a bad sign" that you are becoming "socially maladjusted." However, periods of introspection are often just what is necessary for change and for doing creative work, so a certain degree of isolation under the Pluto transit may be just what you need. Leave the standards and values of others behind and judge the transit by what is going on inside you.

Another notion you may be called on to challenge and discard during a powerful transit is your old self-concept—especially when you are having a transit to your Sun, which represents your self-image. Don't let outdated definitions of yourself paralyze you and hold you back when a transit impels you to try new ways of being. Don't say, for instance, "I'm not the kind of person to teach a class," when you have gained the necessary knowledge and the students are there clamoring for you to begin. Never be limited by your own or other people's definitions of yourself. We all have greater capacity than we have ever used.

Step No. 5: *When you have a lemon, make lemonade.*

Use the transit to develop the positive potential of an aspect. This will help in two ways: 1) It will focus your attention away from the pain and thus lessen it; 2) It will divert some of the energy away from the self-destructive ways of behaving and help you "kick your habit," whatever it is. The more energy that is diverted into a positive expression, the less there is for the negative.

The concept of "when you have a lemon, make lemonade" may be clearer with an example. A client had Venus and Saturn conjunct in the eleventh house. Neptune was opposite it for an entire winter, during which she had some severe disappointments and disillusionments about friends. It was a lonely and depressing time, but she used those lonely winter days to learn about handicrafts (the conjunction is in Gemini). She had always felt inferior to artists and yearned to create beauty as they did. In developing the skills of handicrafts, she fulfilled a long-time ambition.



Step No. 6: *Avoid escapism.* In this culture, we think we have to feel good all the time or we take a drink, take a pill, or hit the road. Using a "pain killer"—be it physical or emotional—can keep you from actually doing something about the problem that is causing the pain of that transit. Many use the pain as a free pass to indulge in escapist behavior, like heavy drinking or drugs. Rather than learning how not to be so self-destructive, they use the situation as an excuse for more drinking or other self-destructive pursuits.

The man whose wife leaves him for beating her when he is drunk, for example, may use her leaving him as a reason to start drinking continually. Escapists, to hear them tell it, are always the innocent victims—never seeing the suffering they caused or the ways they provoked what was done to them. Ask yourself honestly, and not in a breast-beating way, what did I do to deserve this? If you look honestly enough, you will find out.

Step No. 7: *Find out where the pain is coming from and do something about it.* Healers and teachers often say, "Go with the pain"—meaning, experience it fully, don't tense up against it; work until you find out where it comes from. There seems to be much wisdom in this if we have the courage to do so. Seeking deep within your body, deep within your emotions, and deep within your soul to find out where that ache is coming from can help you work it out and purge it once and for all.

Where to Go from Here in Studying Transits

This chapter on transits is meant to provide a beginning understanding of the part transits play in our upward spiritual evolution, because even the most painful transits, properly used, can lead to growth. To analyze a specific transit to your chart or someone else's, you need to combine several parts of this book: the chapter on aspects, the chapter on houses, and the chapters on the two planets involved. For example, suppose that transiting Uranus were making a square to natal Mars. You would read the chapter on Uranus, the one on Mars, and think about the nature of a square. Then you would add in the house placement of natal Mars and what areas of life are involved, as well as the house placement of transiting Uranus. OR, you might just consult a good professional astrologer or an astrology class!!

FROM BEDFORD-STUYVESANT TO THE STARS - BY SUBWAY¹

I walk eagerly up the long ramp to the alcohol treatment center, where I teach astrology as a volunteer. My class, made up of patients from the center, is going to Columbia University tonight to look through a telescope at some of the planets we've been studying. Pausing at the top of the stairs, I check to see which planets are visible. Jupiter is nestled against the Moon, a big white twinkle light against the Moon's softer ivory. "*We picked a good night,*" I think. "*Cold, but so clear we'll be able to see a lot.*"

Happily I push open the door, warm air and warm greetings enfolding me. "Hi, astrology teacher! How are you?" "Look who's here!" Hanging out in the hallway and around the front desk are some of the men I've taught and others I know in passing. Fewer women than men come to the program, and most of the patients are African-American—the center is in Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brooklyn.

I smile and wave at them as I stop to talk to Cheryl, the recreation director. She apologizes, "Sorry, but I can't go with the class tonight. Listen, when will you start a new class? So many of the patients are interested."

"I'm thinking about another beginning class in January. I really enjoy working with the students. Such insightful people!"

"Great!" Cheryl says. "Let me know when you're ready. You're coming to the Christmas party, aren't you? Oscar's written another play, and some of the other patients are performing."

Promising to attend, I open my bag so the security guard can check it, as he routinely does, for contraband liquor. He jokes, "Can't you do anything about these stars? They're sure kicking us Taureans around! You'll be using a classroom on the third floor tonight." I promise to try to make those stars behave.

Puffing slightly from the stairs, I arrive to find two of the students, Nick and George, waiting for me. Nick, a big teddy bear of a guy, greets me with a smile. "How's my favorite astrology teacher?"

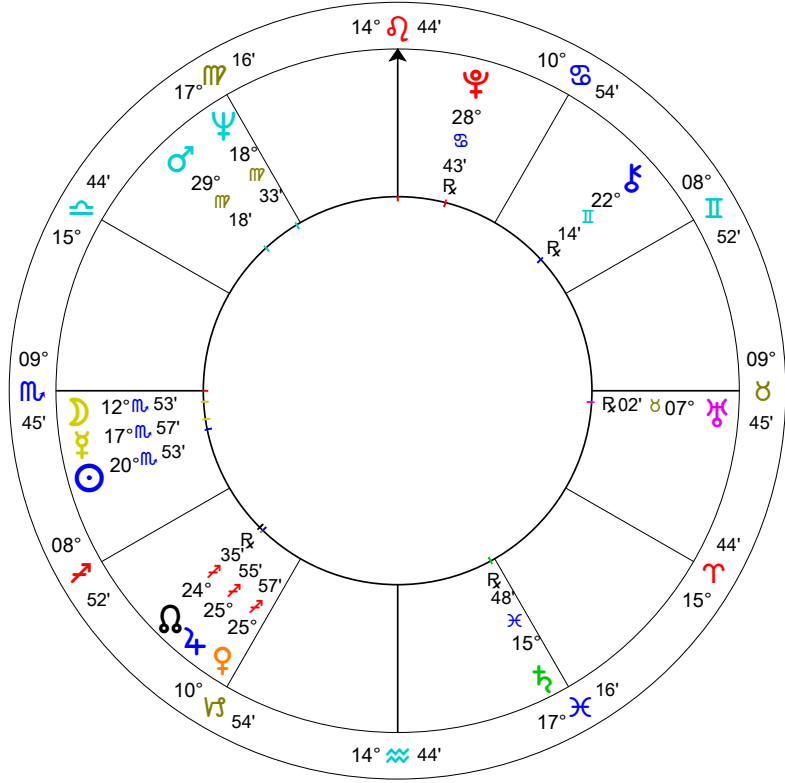
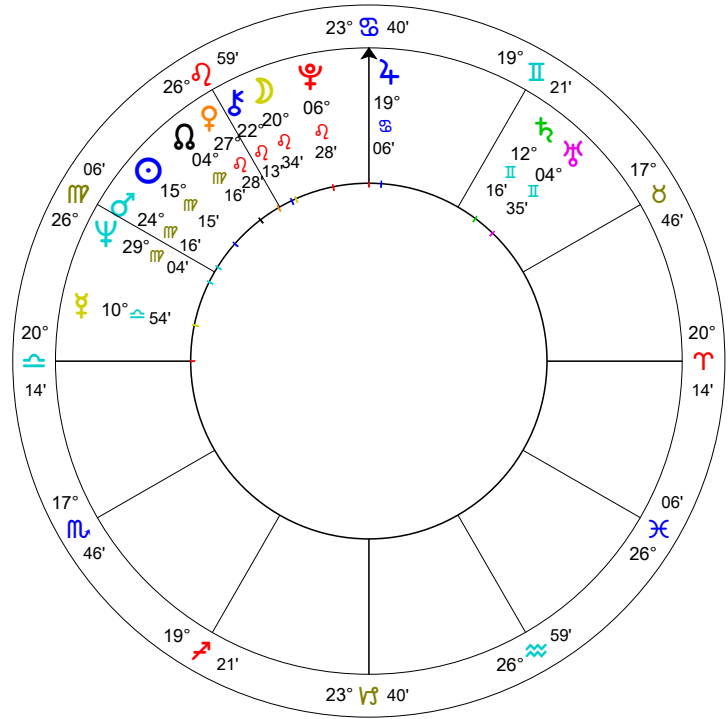
I beam back and ask, "How's life treating you Leos these days?"

"Couldn't be better. Hey, I want you to read this paper I wrote on alcoholism for my sociology class. I did real well on it."



¹ This chapter appeared in *Astrology Guide*. Re printed by permission of Sterling Publications, Inc.

GEORGE:
September 8, 1942
9:30 am ewt
BROOKLYN, NY
73W56; 40N38



JAMES:
NOVEMBER 13, 1936
6:00 am est
SUMMERVILLE, SC
80W11; 33N01



I take the paper to read, but George, too, demands my attention. Because of his three planets in Leo and a strong Uranus, George is zany and overly dramatic in ways people find hard to take seriously, but I am drawn to the mystic I sense underneath. His chart backs me up, too—several planets in the mystical twelfth house, including a conjunction of Mars and Neptune. In the past, that conjunction led him to addiction; now he's using it more positively, pursuing spiritual studies with every spare ounce of energy.

George irritates the class with long, involved questions related to himself rather than the topic, so I encourage him to ask them before or after class. "I was looking at my chart, and I noticed that all the planets are on the top half. What does that mean?"

"It means you're more involved in big, universal questions than in down-to-earth personal concerns," I answer as the rest of the class troops up the stairs and we get settled in the classroom.

"That sounds like me," George says proudly.

I announce, "Class, the observatory will be opening an hour later than we planned. Let's use this time to review."



As usual, there is no chalk or eraser, and I ask if one of them could find some down on the second floor. Jim comes forward with a thoughtful present, a box of chalk and an eraser. A triple Scorpio, Jim makes himself felt even though he rarely speaks, and he manages to get as much attention as anyone else, with that silent magnetism Scorpios can have.

The hour passes quickly, as time always does with these eager students. Their humor and penetrating observation always delight me.

"Are all Cancers stingy?" Nick asks. "My woman is a Cancer, and it takes her a week to spend a nickel."

Joe says he has a lot of trouble with Aquarians. "Seems to me they're playing with a 51-card deck."

I agree. "But what you don't realize, Joe, is they started out with 52 cards like the rest of us, but threw one out because it's more challenging that way. Now, I've known Pisceans who only had 51 cards to begin with."

"Hey, teach," George chimes in, "is it true that 75% of Pisceans drink like fish?" For once the class appreciates his wit, and his Leo Moon soaks up the approval.

"The thing about Pisceans is that they're so self-destructive," adds Sally, who has Pisces rising and knows what she's talking about. "The drinking, I mean. It's like the salmon going upstream to spawn. They know it's going to kill them, but they do it anyway."

"You know, we're joking around about it," says Oscar, the center's



playwright, "but astrology really helps me understand my drinking better. I'm a Capricorn, and we always like to plan far ahead and aim for the top of the mountain, right? Well, that's why I've had so much trouble accepting that AA teaching about taking one day at a time. I know their philosophy is good for me, but it sure is hard to practice."

"But I find that astrology helps me with my AA work," Nick puts in. "Going through our charts the way we do in class helps me in taking my personal inventory ... knowing what I have to work on."

"Me too," Jim actually speaks. "Like when we talked about Mercury and communication, it really hit me how hard it is for me to be open with other people. I have Mercury in Scorpio, and I really have to work at communicating, because if I don't, I feel isolated. I used to have to drink in order to be able to talk to people. Thank God, I'm a little better now."

"What helped me was when we studied the Moon," adds Ron, who has five planets in Moon-ruled Cancer and the Moon in Scorpio. "I sure never got enough feeding from my mother, and I kept looking for it in all the women I went out with. Naturally, none of them wanted to be a mother to a grown-up man, so they'd get fed up with me and I'd start drinking. Cancers can't handle rejection anyway."

"Yeah, but you can't use being a Cancer as a cop-out," Nick reminds him. "Astrology only shows us what we're like, it doesn't mean we're not responsible for our behavior. Otherwise, it's just another excuse, and you know we learned in health education class that us alcoholics are great at finding excuses for everything."

"You're absolutely right, Nick," I commend him.

"Astrology could be a great cop-out if you let yourself use it that way. First of all, there are other ways it could work out—you could be a musician or a spiritual teacher. And second, even if it was working that way at one point in your life, you can always work through from a negative to a positive use of Neptune."

Time speeds by and finally it's time to go. Preparing the class for the trip, I warn, "You know, astronomers don't take too kindly to astrologers. They think we're a bunch of superstitious nuts."



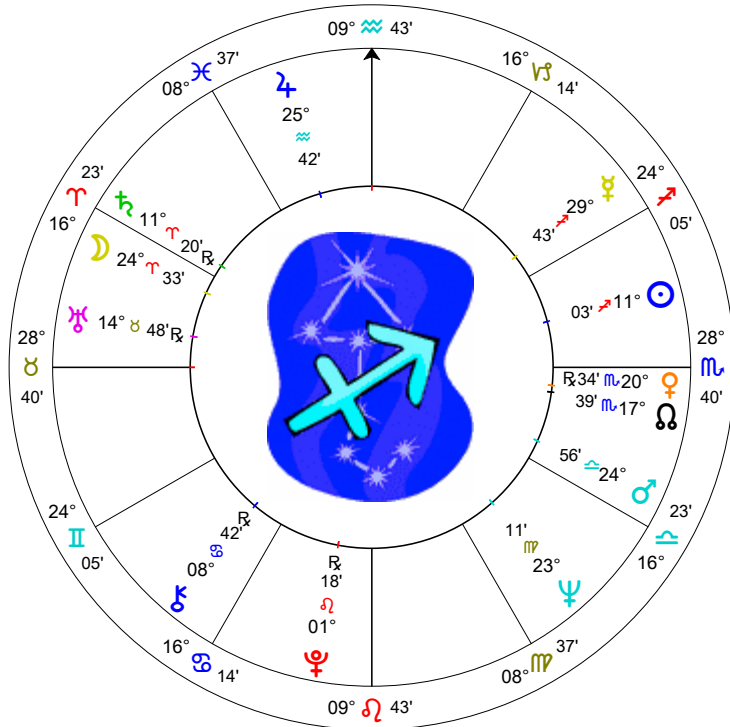
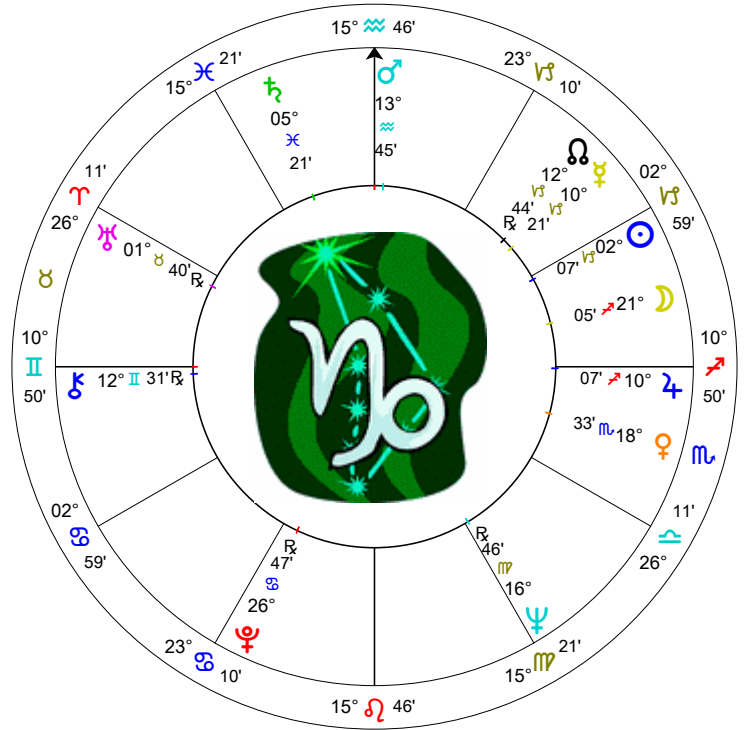
Disbelief echoes around the room. "Say what?" "You're putting us on!"

"I mean it!" I insist.

Aida tries to reason with me. "Look, teach, How can that be? They're working with the planets all the time, and you're trying to tell us they don't believe in astrology? Come on, now! What other reason is there to spend all that time watching the sky?!!" Her prominent Mars in Aquarius shows that Aida can be contentious.



AIDA:
DECEMBER 24, 1935
 3:30 pm est
 CLEVELAND, OH
 81W42; 41N30



RUDOLPH:
DECEMBER 3, 1938
 4:20 pm est
 DARLINGTON, SC
 79W52; 34N18

My attempt to explain the mentality of scientists is a dismal failure.

"Then I bet half of them are doing astrology on the sly," Aida concludes. "It just doesn't make sense for them not to believe in it."

I finally fall back on simple authority. "You'll just have to take my word for it. They don't believe in astrology."

When we get ready to leave for Columbia, I discover that many of the students aren't planning to go.

"It's cold out there!" Aida protests. "You know I'm disabled, and I can't make it that far on a night like this." Aida always alludes to her disability, but in such a bristly way that I can't ask what she means. It isn't visible, whatever it is.

Nick takes me aside to excuse himself and the others. "Are you going to be mad or hurt if we don't go tonight? I know you Cancers get your feelings hurt easy, but it's really cold."

"No, I really won't be mad. We had a good class tonight anyway, and I'm willing to do whatever the class wants." I'd checked out his paper on alcoholism during lulls in the class, and compliment him now on how well it was written.

George, Jim, and two other men from the class still want to go, so the five of us head for the subway, frosty streamers of breath heralding our progress. We walk briskly, eager for the experience that awaits us.



On the way, Lloyd, a Latino double Scorpio, buttonholes me to ask why people associate Scorpios only with sex. I remind him, "Remember when we talked about how the eighth house and Scorpio were connected with sex? You said sex was a good way to control women. That's very Scorpio, and it's also very chauvinistic."

"Oh, yes, but it's true!" he insists. "The next day they sing and cook and clean up the house. But what else is Scorpio about?"

Shelving the argument, I reply, "It's an intense concern with life and death matters...life after death, too. I know you're fascinated with the occult."

At the subway, George puts in a token and bows for me to go through the turnstile. He has Libra rising and his courtly manners are flattering, but just a fraction too dramatic to be taken seriously. On the train, he stands beside me and bends my ear with far-out theories from the latest book he's read. "I read that Jupiter was going to be another star like our sun, but it didn't make it."

"That's Velikovsky's theory," I reply, "and it's interesting, but there's no way to prove it absolutely. Jupiter *is* the biggest planet in our solar system, though. It rules Sagittarius and they love to think big too."

Jim points to Rudolph, who is tall and massively built. "Rudolph is the biggest guy at the Center, and he's a Sag."

Rudolph acknowledges this with good humor and adds, "Today's my birthday, so it's a perfect day for me to look at Jupiter through a telescope."

Lloyd points out that we are getting curious glances from people on the train, and, typically, finds a sexual innuendo in it. "They must think you're something special to have so many men with you." Until this moment, I've been so involved in the conversation that it hasn't occurred to me that our group must look a little strange.

"They'd never believe we're going stargazing," says Jim. "Tell me, Donna, when is Saturn going to quit doing this number on me?" He's been having heavy Saturn transits to his Scorpio Ascendant, Sun, Moon, and Mercury for months, and for some reason, only the negative side is coming out. I've done about all the positive thinking on it that he or I could swallow, but I try to encourage him again.

We arrive at the gates of Columbia, eagerness and the cold making us hurry. As the five of us climb the stately stone stairway, I suddenly see myself ten years earlier on these same stairs, demonstrating with other discontented Columbia students. My mind ping-pongs from that idealistic radical to today's self and back, wondering if I've lost something on the way. I once met an astrotwin of mine—born the same day, month, and



year—and we'd done different things with our strong Uranus. At the point I went into astrology, on a Uranus transit to my Neptune, she joined the Weather people and went off to Cuba. Tonight, looking at the telescope's dome, I decide that astrology was the more rewarding path for me.

Reaching the science building, we take the elevator to the thirteenth floor and climb the remaining flight of stairs. From the roof of the building, the view of Manhattan is so beautiful that we forget the sky for a moment. Then we skirt the dome, looking for the door, and somehow manage to lose it. The second trip around in the darkness, we finally get inside and climb a small rickety ladder to the floor of the dome.

"Wow! That telescope's a big mother!" George exclaims.

There were a few other people there—scientific, academic types, including a father and his precocious little boy.

"I bet they're wondering why we're here," Lloyd whispers.

"Probably afraid we're going to rip off the telescope," Rudolph grins. We all giggle.

"If *they* knew it was for astrology, they'd really be uptight," George whispers. We smile conspiratorially and move closer together.

The astronomer operating the telescope first shows us a cluster of three brilliant stars, their full color spectrum visible through the lens.

Jim is amazed. "Now I know why they say 'like a diamond in the sky!' That's just the way diamonds look under a magnifying glass."

"I'm never going to bring my girlfriend here," George says, squinting through the eyepiece. "It'd give her some ideas I couldn't afford."

"What sign do you think this guy who runs the telescope is?" Rudolph whispers to the group.

"Probably Aquarius," Jim whispers back. "They get off on all this science garbage."

"Hey, mister," George asks aloud, "what sign are you?"

Lloyd pokes him, hoping the man hasn't heard. "Hey, man, remember what Donna said."

Full of mischief as ever, George grins and repeats his question, "Hey, Mister, what astrological sign are you?"

Lloyd moans, as the astronomer draws himself up indignantly and points up at the sky and asks, "How can you look through my telescope at all this grandness and then talk about superstitious nonsense like that? We're dealing with science here!"

Some of the other earnest scientific types who are there titter. "Woolly-minded thinkers," one mutters.

"Look, man," Rudolph whispers to George, "Keep quiet before you get us thrown out of here."

"Man's got to be a Virgo," George grins. "Only sign I know of that takes themselves that seriously."

Next the astronomer looks for Jupiter. He pulls a switch, and the wooden floor of the dome begins turning, inching noisily into the proper position. When he focuses the telescope this time, a stepladder is needed. "Jupiter has twelve moons," he announces, "but only three of them are visible tonight."

Lloyd fantasizes, "Twelve moons! Can you imagine looking up in the sky and seeing twelve moons? You could really sweep a woman off her feet that way!" He climbs up and looks through the eyepiece. "Dios mio! That's beautiful!"

George is next. "Ain't that a blip!" he exclaims.

When I look, I too am moved. Reflected sunlight makes the planet dazzling. A striped pattern is visible on the surface, and the three moons stand out.

Jim looks and asks, "Why can't we see the rest of the moons?"

"Most of them are on the other side of the planet right now," the man replies, "and some are hard to see tonight, because of our atmosphere."

Our own Moon is visible in the slit of the dome right next to Jupiter, so we ask for a look. The astronomer thinks that's boring, but humors us. Craters are visible and the dark



part of the Moon is faintly outlined with light.



We hope to see Saturn, and the astronomer calculates the right ascension in his head. "It's risen, but we probably can't see it yet with the lights refracting on the atmosphere." He flicks the switch and the floor moves up, creaking in protest. He swings the telescope's end as high as he can and searches for Saturn. "Ah, here it is."

I get up on the stool, anxious to see it. Saturn is awesomely bright, with those strangely lovely rings surrounding it. "I don't know why," I tell the students, "but I really love that planet."

George looks next. "Why, it really does have rings! I thought some artist just drew it that way out of his imagination—like a halo around it."

Looking through the scope, Jim says, "This alone is worth the trip. You mean to tell me something that beautiful is causing me all this trouble?"

I ask the astronomer about the recently discovered rings of Uranus. "No, I haven't seen them," he says, "and nothing has come out in any of the astronomy journals, so they're not official as far as I'm concerned. All I know is what I read in the papers."

The astronomer picks out a few more stars, all as beautiful as the first group but with different coloring. By this time our group is freezing, so we descend the rickety stairs to the roof. We pause once more to admire the view of Manhattan. I point out the stars and planets we'd seen magnified through the telescope.

"This is really blowing my mind," George says. "A year ago, I was hanging out on the street corner with the guys, drinking wine. If you'd told me then that I'd be at Columbia University tonight, looking through a telescope, I'd have thought you were crazy."

Inside, we warm up a bit before heading back to the subway and Bedford-Stuyvesant. Everyone agrees that it has been a beautiful evening.

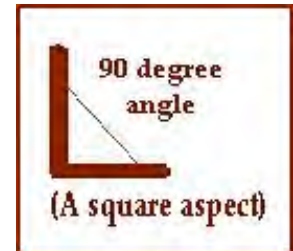


A GLOSSARY OF BASIC ASTROLOGICAL TERMS:

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Ascendant: The zodiac sign on the cusp of the first house is called the Ascendant or **Rising sign**. This sign, determined by the precise time and place of birth, is one of the three most important factors in the chart, along with the Sun and Moon. It represents our outer personality, the characteristics people first remark on when meeting us. It also shows the mask we wear in social situations, which may or may not show our true nature. Our physical appearance often reflects the Ascendant rather than the Sun.

Aspects: The zodiac is a circle of 360°, and the angles formed between two planets in an astrological chart—like 30°, 60°, or 90°--are called aspects. The effect of an aspect is to blend the energies of the two planets together in a way that modifies the way they both function. The type of connection between the planets is determined by the nature of the angle. For instance, a **square** (90° angle) is generally a stressful aspect, while a **trine** (120° angle) is usually harmonious.



Benefic planets, benefics: Venus and Jupiter are traditionally labeled benefics by astrologers, meaning that they are benign forces that bring good fortune our way, yet both have their ill effects when misused. (Also see **malefics**.)

Conjunction, conjunct: A conjunction is formed when two planets stand within range of one another in the zodiac, anywhere from zero to about ten degrees apart. When planets are conjunct, their energies and functions are blended together, as though they were one. This is a powerful aspect, and when the Sun is conjunct another planet, that planet is very important. The person takes on some qualities of the sign the planet is associated with—with Mercury, for example, that sign would be Gemini.

Cusp: The cusp of a house is the border between it and the adjoining house, e.g. between the end of the second house and the beginning of the third. The zodiac sign on the cusp of a house describes, in part, how you function in that area of life. For example, if you have Libra on the cusp of a house, you will show some Libra qualities in matters related to that house. The term cusp also refers to the dividing line between two zodiac signs, and so to hear that someone is born on the cusp of Aries and Taurus means that the Sun on their birthday was either in the last degrees of Aries or the first degrees of Taurus.

Degrees: The zodiac is a circle divided into 360°, and many of the more technical facets of the astrological chart are based on these divisions. Each of the twelve signs contains 30°, and each degree is further divided into minutes (') and seconds ("). Thus you may note that there is a planet in your chart at, say, 25° Aries 55'.

Detriment: This is the sign in which a planet's inherent characteristics have the most difficulty being expressed freely. A planet is in detriment in the sign opposite the one it rules—e.g. Mars rules Aries, and so Mars is in detriment in Aries' opposite sign, Libra.

Elements: Based on a medieval system, the zodiac signs are divided into four elements—fire, earth, air, and water. Fire and air work well together (air keeps a fire burning, and fire warms up cold air), but they do not complement water or earth. Water and earth complement each other—no crops would grow without both—but they do not blend so well with fire and air. The fire signs are Aries, Leo, and Sagittarius. The earth signs are Taurus, Virgo, and Capricorn. The air signs are Gemini, Libra, and Aquarius. The water signs are Cancer, Scorpio, and Pisces.

Emphemeris: A reference book, calendar, or computer program that gives the daily positions of the planets in the solar system.

Exaltation: In a traditional method of evaluating the strength of planets in various zodiac signs, *exaltation* is the sign where a planet is supposedly at its best, including Venus in the sign Pisces, Mars in the sign Capricorn, and the Moon in Taurus.

Fall: In a traditional system of rating the strengths of the planets, a planet is in its *fall* in the sign where it is supposedly at its weakest or worst—the sign opposite the one where it is [exalted](#). Since Venus is exalted in Pisces, it is in its fall in Virgo.

Grand Trine: A Grand Trine is an equilateral triangle in the astrological chart made up of three planets about 120° from each other. It requires planets from all three of the signs in a particular element. For instance, a Grand Trine in air would include at least one planet in Gemini, one in Libra, and one in Aquarius. The Grand Trine is supposed to be an extremely fortunate combination.

Glyph: A shorthand symbol that astrologers use to represent a planet, sign, or aspect. An example is the glyph for Mars, shown here.



House, Houses: The astrological chart is a circle divided into twelve pie-shaped wedges called houses. Each house represents a number of related areas of life (e.g. the seventh house represents marriage, business partnerships, and other committed relationships.) For in-depth descriptions of the houses, read Chapter 13.

House cusp, see cusp.

House Position: The house of the chart where a given planet is placed; e.g. if Jupiter's [glyph](#) is found in the second house, then that is its house position.

House Ruler: The ruler of a house is the planet that rules the sign on the cusp (beginning edge) of that house. If Neptune ruled the tenth house, this would mean that the sign Pisces, which Neptune rules, would be on the tenth house cusp, also known as the Midheaven. With Leo on the seventh house cusp, the Sun is the ruler, so for more information about this particular seventh house, you would look at the

sign and position of the Sun. The ruler of the first house (a.k.a. the Ascendant) is considered particularly important—in traditional astrology, it was called the Chart Ruler.

[Mercurial people](#) include not only those with Gemini Sun, Moon, or Ascendant, but also those with many aspects to Mercury in their charts or with several planets in the third house of the chart, the house of communication.

[Midheaven](#): The cusp of the tenth house, the career point at the top of the chart, among the most powerful points in the horoscope. It is determined by the precise time and place of birth and changes by a degree every four minutes, and is so sensitive that transits to that point can correlate with profound changes in our career and status in the world. Both the sign on the Midheaven and any planets that aspect that point are powerful career indicators.

[Neptunians](#): This group includes those with Pisces or the twelfth house strongly emphasized in their birth charts because the Sun, Moon, or several planets falls in either Pisces or the twelfth house. Also included are people with Neptune aspecting the Sun, Moon, Ascendant, Midheaven or several planets.

[Opposition](#): (180° or six signs apart, plus or minus 8°.) Signs opposite each other are compatible in two ways: they are in complementary elements and operate in the same modality (a cardinal sign is opposite another cardinal sign, and so on). When expressed properly, opposite signs complement and fulfill each other.

[Plutonians](#): These include people with several planets in Scorpio, a number of planets in the related eighth house of the birth chart, many aspects to natal Pluto, or Pluto near the Ascendant, Midheaven, or aspecting the Sun or Moon.

[Progressions](#): Refers to how the planetary positions unfolded in the days and weeks after birth. In one simple form of progression, called Day for a Year, the positions of the planets on the tenth day after birth correspond to the conditions in your life at age ten. We will not be dealing with progressions here because I don't often use them.

[Quincunx](#): (150° or five signs apart) This aspect—also known as the inconjunct—usually involves two signs that are absolutely at odds with each other and therefore are difficult to reconcile. There is no natural connection between the two signs by [element](#) or by the cardinal/fixed/mutable division of signs.

[Retrograde](#): occurs at various times of the year in the orbits all of the planets in the solar system--excluding the sun and moon. In these periods, which can last several months for the slower-moving outer planets, the planet appears to be moving backward from the point of view of the earth. This illusion occurs because while they are on the opposite side of the sun from the earth, they appear to be moving in the opposite direction from us.

[Rising Sign](#): See Ascendant or Rising sign.

[Ruler, rulership](#): Each of the twelve signs has a ruler—that is a planet that is most like the energies, urges, and needs of that sign. For Aries, that planet is Mars, for Gemini, it is Mercury, for Sagittarius, it is Jupiter, and so on. See Table 1 for a complete list. In order to fully understand the expression in your chart of a sign or house, look at the condition of its ruler. (See [house ruler](#).)

[Saturn return](#): These significant eras in our lives occur each time Saturn completes an orbit around the Sun from where it was when we were born. Since Saturn takes around 29 years to complete that orbit, these eras occur when we are between 28-30 years old (the first Saturn Return) and 56-8 years old (the second Saturn Return). These Returns are considered significant milestones in the maturation cycle.

[Saturnian](#): These are people with important planets like the Sun, Moon, Ascendant or several planets in Capricorn or in the associated tenth house. They also include those with Saturn on the Ascendant or Midheaven, aspecting their Sun or Moon, or with numerous planets forming aspects to Saturn.

[Sextile](#): (60° or two signs apart.) Complementary elements are usually involved in the sextile—water with earth and fire with air. Planets in sextile, then, can complement or enhance each other in some ways, each one filling in something the other lacks.

[Square](#): A square is formed when two planets are 90° apart in the zodiac—three signs apart, plus or minus 5-6 degrees. For instance, a planet in Cancer could be square to planets in Aries or Libra, the two signs that are 90° apart. Squares represent two urges or needs in a head-on conflict. Squares are the energizing forces within a person—the needs that drive them on. The needs and desires of the two planets clash, and the individual must work to reconcile them.

[Stellium](#): A stellium is a combination of three or more planets placed within a narrow range of the zodiac, each no more than 8-10° from the next. This makes the planets involved act in concert with one another, becoming a very powerful influence. The influence is strongest if they also fall into the same astrological sign and house.

[Transits](#): This refers to the current positions of the planets in the solar system and what aspects they form with the planets in your natal chart. You would discover your transits by consulting a reference book called an [ephemeris](#) that gives these positions on a daily basis or by ordering a computerized printout of your personal transits.

[Trine](#): (120° or four signs apart, plus or minus 5°.) Planets in a trine aspect are usually in the same element—e.g., from water sign to water sign or from air sign to air sign. Since they have many similar traits, needs, tastes, preferences, and abilities, the two planets enhance each other and do not create resistance or friction. They work together

cooperatively for the same or similar ends.

Uranians: These are people with Uranus strongly featured in their birth charts. Uranus is strong when it is on the Ascendant, Midheaven, in aspect to the Sun or Moon or several planets, or if the sign Aquarius is prominent in the chart because the Sun, Moon, Ascendant or several planets fall into that sign or in the eleventh house of the birth chart.

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